BENNETT, COLEMAN & CO. LTD. | Estd. 1838 | VOL. 43 NO.44 | BENGALURU | FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2026 | METRO | PAGES 38 | PRICE ₹6**

THE TIMES OF INDIA

INCLUDES 6 PAGES OF BANGALORE TIMES AND *6 PAGES OF TIMES PROPERTY (*CITY AREAS ONLY)

INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

A **court in Seoul sentences former South Korean president Yoon Suk Yeol to life in prison** for his brief imposition of martial law in a dramatic culmination to the nation's biggest political crisis in decades, P 17

In his 1st letter to B'desh PM Tarique Rahman, Trump pushes for making ties 'stronger than ever before' through decisive action to complete routine def agreements and implementation of reciprocal trade agreement, P 17

Bodo/Glimt continue their remarkable debut Champions League campaign with a 3-1 victory over Inter Milan in the knockout play-off round first leg, as Kasper Hogh scores once and creates two other goals, P 18

In a landmark LA trial over social media addiction, **Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg denies that Instagram, Facebook target kids despite being confronted with evidence** suggesting otherwise, P 17

Modi calls for inclusive AI, unveils MANAV framework

'AI Will Benefit The World Only When Shared'

Dipak.Dash@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: PM Modi pushed on Thursday for democratisation of AI, saying it must become a tool for inclusion and empowerment and a force for global good, especially across the Global South, while taking aim at countries and companies that consider AI to be a strategic asset that must be developed in secrecy.

Questioning the walls that have come up around AI development as it is leveraged by countries and firms as a force and profit multiplier, Modi said India thinks different. "It is said sunlight is the best disinfectant. We believe AI will benefit the world only when it is shared. When codes are open and shared, millions of young minds can make them safer and better. Therefore, let us resolve to develop AI as a global common good," he said.

Speaking at the AI Impact Summit and with heads of foreign govts and tech giants and representatives of 100 countries in audience, Modi cautioned against reducing individuals to "mere data points or raw material" and unveiled India's approach of "MANAV" framework of "responsible AI". He said AI's transformative power must be a multiplier.

▶PM: Future in AI, P 7

SATURATION COVERAGE: P 13, 14, 15 & 16

PM Modi with Meta chief AI officer Alexandr Wang (from left), Google CEO Sundar Pichai, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman and Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei. While the others were holding hands, Altman & Amodei avoided contact, putting up their fists instead. The interaction became a symbol of deep rivalries in the AI industry. **Altman later said, 'I was sort of confused... I just wasn't sure what we were supposed to be doing'** | P 13

Tata, OpenAI tie up to develop data centre

Tata Group and OpenAI have entered into a strategic partnership under which TCS will build AI infrastructure with 100MW capacity. OpenAI and Tata Group will develop local, AI-ready data centre capacity. P 15

Will invest $110bn in AI infra: Mukesh

RIL CMD Mukesh Ambani said his conglomerate has lined up investments of $110 billion to build India's sovereign AI infrastructure over seven years, including data centres and a nationwide edge compute network. P 15

Bill Gates skips keynote address

Bill Gates did not deliver his scheduled keynote, with his foundation announcing just hours before the address that the decision was taken "after careful consideration" to ensure that attention remains on summit priorities. P 13

Epstein files fallout: Andrew arrested over 'misconduct'

Charles's Bro Released After Over 11 Hours

Naomi Canton

London: The younger brother of King Charles, Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor (formerly known as Prince Andrew), was arrested at his home on Sandringham Estate on Thursday morning, his 66th birthday, by plainclothes police after **accusations that as a trade envoy he had shared confidential UK govt information** with the disgraced financier and sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

No other royal has been arrested in modern British history, making Andrew's arrest the biggest of many scandals that have plagued the UK's House of Windsor. Princess Anne had been convicted twice but was merely summoned to court.

Six unmarked police vehicles turned up at 8am at Wood Farm, a secluded royal property on the Norfolk estate, and arrested the former prince, who is currently eighth in line to the throne, on suspicion of misconduct in public office. A royal spokesperson said Buckingham Palace had not been informed before the arrest was carried out.

At around 7.20pm local time Andrew was spotted leaving Aylsham police station. A photographer managed to get a photo of him trying to lie down in the back seat of the car and he looked "stunned and terrified". Thames Valley Police said: "The arrested man has now been released under investigation. We can also confirm that our searches in Norfolk have now concluded." Police searches in Royal Lodge were still on. Andrew has not been charged with any offence.

▶ EDIT: Epstein Pals & 'Epsteining', P 14

OFFENCE CARRIES MAX SENTENCE OF LIFE TERM

- Andrew was **taken into custody at King Charles III's private retreat** in Sandringham, where he now resides
- Police say 'assessing' reports that he sent confidential **trade reports to Epstein in '10**
- Emails released as part of Epstein files appeared to show Andrew **sharing reports of official visits to Hong Kong, Vietnam and Singapore**
- Offence carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, **experts say shorter term more likely** if convicted by a jury
- The **longest he can be held for is 96 hours**, but this would require multiple extensions from senior police officers and a magistrate's court
- A **woman had earlier alleged** she was sent to the UK by Epstein for a **sexual encounter with Andrew**
- **Andrew had denied charges**, saying he never suspected Epstein's criminal activities

Law must take its course: Monarch

King Charles, who stripped Andrew of his royal titles last year because of his Epstein friendship, said he had "learned with the deepest concern" the news about his brother's arrest. In a statement signed personally instead, he said the authorities had the royal family's "full and wholehearted support and cooperation" and that "the law must take its course".

▶Max sentence, P 17

Won't go abroad without SC nod, says Anil Ambani

New Delhi: ADAG head Anil Ambani undertook before SC Thursday that he would not leave the country without its permission to blunt the argument that he may flee India to avoid consequences of the ongoing probe into the alleged siphoning of ₹40,000cr from bank loans to ADAG firms. "I state on oath that I have not left India since July 2025, since the inception of the present investigations, and presently have no plans or intention to travel outside India," he said. TNN

▶ Had no plans, P 9

'Pan-India problem': SC hits out at freebies, asks parties to rethink

Dhananjay.Mahapatra @timesofindia.com

New Delhi: In a stinging criticism of govts taking recourse to freebies, Supreme Court on Thursday said the distribution of largesse and direct bank transfer of money will encourage sloth that will be detrimental to nation-building.

A bench of CJI Surya Kant, Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi said states must invest in good schools, hospitals, training centres and job-creating projects to ensure dignified livelihoods.

The comments came on a petition by the Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation challenging Rule 23 of the Electricity (Amendment) Act, 2024, which enforces financial discipline on discoms and could hinder Tamil Nadu govt's free or subsidised power schemes.

The CJI said, "This is a pan-India problem, and we are not referring to TN alone. It is high time that political stalwarts, leaders and political parties irrespective of their ideologies along with social activists revisit such freebie schemes."

▶ Revenue-spending gap, P7

IN THE COURTS

- Producer of film 'Ghooskhor Pandat' **informs Supreme Court of decision to withdraw the film's title**
- Allahabad **HC acquits murder convict after 37 yrs in jail**, cites flawed verdict that spared co-accused | P 6
- Uttarakhand HC sets aside power transmission corporation MD appointment **over lack of engg degree** | P 12

EC to start SIR of electoral rolls in K'taka from April

Bengaluru: The Election Commission is set to begin the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Karnataka from April. The state is among the second group of 22 states and Union territories scheduled for the exercise, **reports Pearl D'Souza**. Bihar was the first state where the SIR was launched on June 24, 2025.

▶ Phase 3 of SIR: P 6

Subsequently, on Oct 27, the ECI announced the exercise for a group of 12 states. Even as the revision is under way in those states, the poll panel has written to the chief electoral officers of the second group to begin preparations.

▶ Law dept to study, P 3

India should ban social media for U-15: Macron; keep AI child-safe: PM

Times News Network

New Delhi: PM Modi and French President **Emmanuel Macron** on Thursday spoke on the need to shield children from the harms of AI and social media. "We must become even more vigilant about children's safety. Just as a school syllabus is carefully curated, the AI space too must be child-safe and family-guided," Modi said at the India AI Impact Summit.

Addressing the summit earlier, Macron expressed hope that India would join France and other countries in banning social media networks for children under 15 years of age, emphasising that protecting children is about not just regulation but civilisation as well. He said there was no reason to expose children to content online that is legally forbidden in the real world.

▶Make internet safe, P 7

Macron: Will raise India content in Rafale

French prez Macron Thursday said Rafale jets will boost India's military strength and he is committed to having more indigenous content in 'made-in-India Rafale'. "I don't see how people can criticise the aircraft because it (Rafale) makes your country stronger." P 7

Farmer protests stall resumption of safaris in state

A day after govt lifted the ban on safaris, the forest dept did not resume the operations in Nagarhole and Bandipur tiger reserves due to absence of guidelines and protests by farmers, **reports Shrinivasa M.** There were no enquiries from tourists about safari relaunch. P 5

Manipur man braves bullets to save sparrows

In a country where house sparrows & their habitats are disappearing, Anish Ahamad is in the 7th year of a fragile mission, "Save Sparrow", in Manipur's Churachandpur, knocking on doors while carrying handmade sparrow nests & asking families to help the species survive, **reports M K Henry**. P 20

HC issues notices to 42 Bihar MLAs

The Patna HC has issued notices to 42 members of the Bihar legislative assembly in connection with petitions filed by defeated candidates alleging electoral irregularities and discrepancies in their election affidavits.

Bangladesh Hindu min: Committed to minority safety

Nitai Roy Chowdhury, 77, lone Hindu minister in PM Tarique Rahman-led govt and vice-chairman of Bangladesh Nationalist Party's central committee, said the administration was committed to ensuring the safety of all minorities and restoring cordial relations with India, asserting that fundamentalism would not be allowed to spread in Bangladesh, **reports Kalyan Das**.

He spoke to **TOI** in an exclusive interview over phone after taking oath as culture minister. Chowdhury won from Magura-2 constituency.

▶ Parties now realise, P 17

Reach N-deal soon or face 'bad things': US to Iran

Washington: President Donald Trump warned Iran on Thursday that it must reach a deal over its nuclear program or "bad things" will happen, and appeared to set a 10-day deadline before the US might take action.

Amid a massive US military buildup in the Middle East that has fuelled fears of a wider war, he said negotiations with Iran were going well but insisted Tehran has to reach a "meaningful" agreement. Trump's warning come during the first meeting of his Board of Peace in Washington. "You'll be finding out over the next probably 10 days," he said. REUTERS

▶ Diplomacy or war? P 17

Screens down, books up: K'taka's new school push

Sruthy Susan Ullas @timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: With unchecked use of gadgets leading to a significant decline in reading and learning abilities, Karnataka govt has announced a statewide campaign — *Mobile Bidi Pustaka Hidi* (drop mobile, take up books) — to encourage reading habit among 50 lakh students in govt schools and curb excessive mobile phone usage.

In a recent circular, the department of state education, research and training — which will oversee programme implementation — has said the key objective is to systematically cultivate a love of reading among students and shape them into responsible citizens with "active, thoughtful, and high-thinking abilities".

The department has urged schools to create awareness about the safe and moderate use of phones & social media through co-curricular activities.

Libraries to stock pricey books and bestsellers

The state libraries department has lifted price caps that restricted purchase of popular books, including bestsellers and competitive exam guides. The department's order expands reader demand procurement from 10% to 40%, **reports Pearl D'Souza**. P 4

▶Library habits, P 2

TOI PICKS THE TEAM OF THE WC (ROUND 1)

A team of the tournament is usually picked after the event concludes. But it tends to be heavily loaded with players from squads that go to the semifinals and beyond. As the first round of the 2026 T20 World Cup draws to a close and the Super 8 looms, **TOI** crunches data and assesses performances to pick 12 players — including some relatively little-known names — who have made a deep impact so far

1 Sahibzada Farhan: The Pakistani opener is sitting atop the run charts. His 58-ball 100* against Namibia fired his team into the Super 8. His only failure was against India, and Pak lost that game badly | **Matches:** 4, **Runs:** 220, **Avg:** 73.3, **Strike Rate:** 164.2

2 Pathum Nissanka: The Sri Lanka opener's unbeaten 100 off 52 balls was the first ton of this WC and also the hammer blow that condemned Australia to an early exit | **M:** 4, **R:** 199, **Avg:** 66.3, **SR:** 156.7

3 Ishan Kishan (wk): His 77 off 40 balls against Pak is probably the innings of the tournament so far, given the context and how everyone else struggled | **M:** 4, **R:** 176, **Avg:** 44.0, **SR:** 202.3

4 Suryakumar Yadav (C): His unbeaten 84 against US pulled India out of a deep hole. Also made useful contributions against Pak and Netherlands | **M:** 4, **R:** 162, **Average:** 54, **SR:** 136.1

5 Dipendra Singh Airee: Gave Nepal its first T20 World Cup win with an unbeaten 50 off 23 against Scotland. Also, nearly pulled off the heist of the tournament against England | **M:** 4, **R:** 169, **Avg:** 56.3, **SR:** 144.4, **Wickets:** 2, **Economy Rate:** 6.4

6 Bas de Leede: The Dutch allrounder has influenced games with both bat and ball. His unbeaten 72 and 2/20 against Namibia gave Netherlands their only win in this WC | **M:** 4, **R:** 158, **Avg:** 52.7, **SR:** 139.8, **Wkts:** 5, **ER:** 7.8

Text: Hindol Basu
Stats: Rajesh Kumar

FOR PLAYERS 7-12, TURN TO P 19

HOT DEBATE: CAMPAIGN PUSHES FOR LONGER ACCESS HOURS — 5AM TO 10PM

SUMMER CALL: Keep parks open all day, say citizens

Sanjay.Murty
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: As summer temperatures rise, a debate is heating up across Bengaluru, with a citizens' campaign demanding that public parks remain open through the hottest hours of the day.

Residents and activists are auditing parks across neighbourhoods, documenting closure timings and locked gates. Their concern is straightforward: green spaces are essential public infrastructure and should be accessible when heat is at its peak.

The push is the strongest in south Bengaluru, where Barshat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) had earlier allowed parks to stay open from 5am to 10pm. That order was later rolled back, and several parks now shut between 11am and 4pm, and again at 8pm — limiting access during the harshest part of the day.

For professionals, students, gig workers and street vendors, afternoons in parks offer rare respite from the heat. Campaigners argue that in a warming city, shaded public spaces are not a luxury but a necessity — and should remain open when they are needed most. The initiative demanding full-day access to parks is being led by the Indian Ploggers Army in collaboration with Heat Watch India. Residents have been urged to send photographs and details of parks that remain closed during the afternoon. Nagaraj, popularly known as 'Plog Raja', is spearheading the campaign. "The data will be collated over one month, after which the team plans to approach the respective city corporation commissioners with an appeal to extend the timings," he said.

"For the delivery partners and labourers building our cities, a park is often the only place to find shade and a meal. For the office-goer with a lunch-box, it's a necessary alternative to restaurants that do not allow outside food," he added, and called upon authorities to prioritise dignity and community care over rigid timings.

Founder of HeatWatch Foundation, Apekshita Varshney, termed the reinstating of extended park timings a simple and vital public health measure. "People from every walk of life use parks, but the impact falls hardest on those without private cooling, including gig and platform workers, waste workers, domestic workers, and more, who depend on parks for a moment of rest and some shade," she said.

BSCC joint commissioner Naveen Kumar Raju said the corporation staff require 8 to 4 hours for maintenance of parks. He said he would discuss extending the timings with the commissioner in view of summer.

'Don't deny us the only cool place we have left'

Photo for representation only

Campaigners argue that in a warming city, shaded public spaces are not a luxury but a necessity

Student and JP Nagar resident Rishi Jayaprakash, a regular at parks in JP Nagar and Jayanagar, said: "Recently, when I was spending all day at the library, the park was the only place I could go to eat my lunch and clear my head. I still remember being a three-year-old, coming home from kindergarten and sitting with my grandmother while she fed me tomato rice under the trees. These are not just patches of grass; they are a huge part of our lives. With the city getting this hot, closing them early feels like taking away the only cool, quiet spot we have left."

Jayanagar 4th Block resident Siddharth Munot, who visits Akkamadevi Park on Rashtreeya Vidyalaya Road, said: "Parks are public property and should be open round the clock, especially in summer. Most other states, like Rajasthan and Maharashtra, keep parks open the whole day. I'm unsure why Karnataka has a different policy."

Fake raid: Janitor-duo turns GST officers, extorts tobacco trader

Chaithanya.Swamy
@timesofindia.com

Familiar with officers' dress code, routines, and raid procedures, the accused leveraged their insider knowledge to conduct a meticulously staged impersonation

Bengaluru: In a brazen inside-job, two housekeeping staff allegedly impersonated GST officers, staged a sham raid and extorted Rs 5 lakh from a tobacco trader. Their deception unravelled when vigilance officials noticed a sudden and conspicuous change in their lifestyle.

The accused, Nagaraj P, 37, and Dadafir Ballari, 33, were outsourced housekeeping staff at the office of Principal Commissioner of Central Tax and GST Commissionerate (Bengaluru west), housed in the BMTC bus stand building in Banashankari. Well-versed in the officers' dress code, routines, and raid procedures, the duo allegedly leveraged their insider knowledge to carry out a meticulously staged impersonation.

Suspicion over their behaviour prompted a surprise inspection by vigilance officials Tuesday. A search of their room inside the office premises revealed cash bundles, Rs 1 lakh with Dadafir and Rs 1.5 lakh with Nagaraj, along with a few forged identity cards and fake search warrants.

Among the recovered items were three bogus ID cards bearing Nagaraj's photograph but different designations: a CLTS staff member, an intelligence officer named Gaurav Kumar, and even a sepoy — all falsely shown as issued by the ministry of finance's GST office. Officials also seized six fabricated search warrant orders purportedly issued by govt authorities.

Investigators soon uncovered the duo's alleged modus operandi. Posing as GST intelligence officials, they reportedly conducted a fake raid on a tobacco trader's office in Peenya on Jan 1. Threatening to seize goods and file cases, they coerced the trader into paying Rs 5 lakh. The Rs 2.5 lakh recovered from them is believed to be part of the extorted amount. An officer said the duo exploited their proximity to real officials to mimic procedures convincingly. "They knew how officers dressed, spoke, and conducted raids. That familiarity helped them gain the trader's trust and intimidate him," the officer said.

An officer said the duo exploited their proximity to real officials to imitate procedures convincingly. "They knew how officers dressed, spoke and conducted raids. That familiarity allowed them to gain the trader's trust and intimidate him," the officer said.

The accused have been remanded in judicial custody, while investigators plan to seek their police custody to probe whether other traders were duped, how the fake IDs and warrants were created, and the role of the outsourcing firm that had deployed them to the GST office. A case has been registered at Banashankari police station under multiple sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

SC stays high court paragraphs on BMIC project

Bengaluru: The Supreme Court issued notice specifically in respect of two paragraphs (77 and 78) of the Karnataka high court judgment in relation to Bangalore Mysore Infrastructure Corridor (BMIC) project and stayed operation of those paragraphs pending further consideration.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kumar and K Vinod Chandran passed this order February 16 after hearing an appeal filed by NICE company.

While dismissing the writ petition in its Jan 9 judgment, a high court division bench observed that even after 25 years, the project remained on paper as only 1km of road was laid. Hence, the state govt must decide on fresh planning by discarding the framework agreement (FWA) at the earliest to improve the city's living conditions. TNN

Teachers urged to cultivate library habits among children

▶Continued from page 1

Students should be encouraged to simultaneously take up indoor and outdoor sports, painting, singing, story and poetry writing, and embroidery.

Teachers should take steps to encourage use of library and good books. Children should be introduced to use of maps, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and other reference books available in school. Activities such as introducing the book read, storytelling competitions and review writing should be organised.

In collaboration with the health department, schools must educate students on likely mental health problems and effects on academic performance. The women and child welfare department must create awareness among mothers and the community through anganwadi workers.

The department can invite gram panchayat members, who can encourage children to visit the library more often. Police officials from cybercrime can raise awareness about issues like cyberbullying.

HOW PARENTS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

CATCH 'EM YOUNG: Activities such as introducing book reading, storytelling contest, review writing should be held

- Excessive screen time affects learning, impairs concentration, effects mental health, shows noticeable decline in academic performance
- Parents must understand why children are using mobile phones
- They must not give phones to children during meals or at bedtime; set usage time limit
- They should lead by example, controlling their own mobile phone use

Safety on track: Platforms at three more Metro stations get barricades

Sachith.Kidiyoor
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: BMRCL has installed steel barricades at three more Metro stations after previously securing two others that witness high daily footfall. With another station set to get the safety barrier, the city will have six stations with platforms equipped with railings, meant to streamline queues and prevent passengers from falling onto tracks.

Previously, barricades were installed at Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Interchange at Majestic and RV Road Metro stations. Of the four new ones, Indiranagar, KR Pura and Benniganahalli Metro stations have got the barriers, barring MG Road, officials said.

Nadaprabhu Kempegowda station sees over 2.5 lakh commuters using the four platforms of Purple and Green lines daily, the highest, followed by RV Road station with over 91,000 commuters. Benniganahalli handles about 48,809 passengers daily. Indiranagar 42,866, and KR Pura and MG Road around 35,000. BMRCL's chief PRO B L Yeshwanth Chavan said, "Barricades were installed for safety and to maintain queues. Depending on requirement, barricades will be installed at other stations too."

STANDING GUARD: The move comes in the wake of multiple incidents involving individuals attempting to jump onto tracks in Metro stations

The move comes in the wake of incidents involving individuals attempting to jump onto tracks, resulting in fatalities in some cases.

Platform screen doors

Commuters have also long demanded platform screen doors (PSDs) as a more robust safety solution. But, BMRCL has maintained that PSDs weren't part of the plan for operational lines and would be considered in upcoming phases, citing high installation costs and operational challenges.

The city's Metro network spans 96km with 81 operational stations. Rajneesh T, a commuter, said, "At several stations, there is hardly any space on the platform during peak hours. People struggle to board the train and staff also find it difficult to manage the crowd. The problem is worse at Majestic. Instead of steel barricades, BMRCL should opt for PSDs, which open only after train arrives."

"Policies may change, but my dreams do not."

I am a Gen Z.

idp

Attend IDP's Biggest

Study Abroad Expo.

UK, USA, Ireland, Dubai & Malaysia

Powered by POONAWALLA FINCORP

Sat, 21st Feb
11:00 am - 4:00 pm

Hotel Taj MG Road, Bangalore

SCAN TO REGISTER & know participating institutions

MUST-ATTEND PANEL DISCUSSIONS AND SEMINAR

9:30 am - 10:30 am:
Employability opportunities for international students in UK.
Panelists:
Naercio Magaia - Head of Internationalisation, Engineering and Informatics, University of Sussex.
Anjana Singh - Regional Head (South Asia), University of East Anglia.
Morgan Edwards - Regional Manager (Middle East, Central & South Asia), Lancaster University.
Dhruv Jain - International Student Ambassador.

10:00 am - 10:45 am: Skills, salary & smart university choices: Visa insights & work opportunities in the USA.
Panelists:
Prasenjit Guptasarma - PhD, Dean for Academic Affairs, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
Deepika Phukan - South Asia International Manager, University of Missouri, Kansas City
Zeke Montgomery - Associate Director, Graduate Recruitment, Enrollment Management & Student Success, Drexel University

11:00 am - 11:45 am:
Ireland: Education, Innovation, and career opportunities.
Speaker:
Carole Deering - Senior Recruitment & Admissions Manager (South Asia), UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate School of Business.

Why attend this Expo | Meet over 150 top institutions.* | Up to 100% Scholarships.* | On-spot applications with application fee waivers.* | IDP Exclusive benefits and discounts on Education Loan, Accommodation, International Banking, Forex Card, International Money Transfer and lots more.

Why choose IDP | 55+ years of global expertise in International education. | Co-owner of IELTS. | All IDP services are free of cost.*

Over 250,000 dreams took flight with IDP in the last 3 years. Yours could be next!

*T&C apply

JP Nagar 080-46404888 | St. Mark's Road 080-44118888 | Whitefield 080-68457888

idp.com | Associate Partners ICICI Bank Credila

Neighbour kills woman in front of wheelchair-bound spouse

Shop Owner Knew Couple For 10 Years

Times News Network

R Shobha & accused N Shivakumar

Accused Shivakumar told police he knew Shobha takes her husband for a sunbath every afternoon, leaving the door unlocked, and returns after an hour. He entered the house Wednesday but as the couple returned early, he was caught frisking the cupboards for valuables. Fearing she would call police, he pulled a knife from the kitchen and stabbed her in the neck

Bengaluru: A debt-ridden grocery shop owner allegedly stabbed his 60-year-old neighbour to death Wednesday after she caught him trying to steal gold ornaments from her Nelamangala home. The victim, R Shobha, was attacked in front of her husband, Ranganath, 70, who was in his wheelchair.

Paralysed from the neck down for the past 14 years, Ranganath was helpless as the accused, N Shivakumar, attacked and killed his wife, Shobha, police said.

After the brutal assault, Shivakumar snatched her mangalsutra (nuptial gold chain) and two gold bangles before fleeing the scene. The grisly crime came to light around 6pm when Purushottam, a physiotherapist who had been attending to Ranganath for the past decade, entered the house and found Shobha lying lifeless. Shocked and panicked, he immediately called police.

When cops arrived and began their investigation, Shivakumar was reportedly standing outside among the curious onlookers. He even approached a couple of officers, casually asking if they had any leads on the killer.

"By then, one team had collected CCTV footage, which showed a man on a gearless scooter arriving at Shobha's house in the afternoon. About 30 minutes later, he hurriedly rode away. On checking further, we identified him as Shivakumar, a grocery shop owner living just a few houses away in the third lane," an officer said.

Soon after, police reached Shivakumar's house, where he had just finished dinner with his wife and minor daughter. "At first, he pleaded innocence, claiming he had never visited Shobha's house. When we showed him the CCTV footage, he said he went only to ask if she needed any grocery. But a deeper interrogation revealed the full truth," the officer said.

Shivakumar was arrested that night, and police recovered the stolen mangalsutra and bangles, which he had hidden inside his home. His wife was left in shock, struggling to come to terms with the fact that the man she had known for over a decade had killed a neighbour.

Plot to repay ₹8L debt

Shivakumar told police that he planned to steal gold from Shobha's house to repay his debts of Rs 8 lakh.

"I knew the couple for the last 10 years and was aware that Shobha had plenty of gold ornaments. She came from a family of gold merchants and often wore different gold chains and bangles. She took her ailing husband for a sunbath every afternoon. At such times, Shobha did not lock the door. I noticed Shobha pushing the wheelchair outside the house and knowing they would not be back for at least one hour, I entered the house. But, they returned early and Shobha caught me while I was frisking cupboards. Fearing she would call police and get me arrested, I pulled a knife from the kitchen and stabbed her in the neck," he told police.

Unable to walk, senior citizen dies in fire

Times News Network

Bengaluru: An 83-year-old man, unable to walk because of gangrene, was charred to death in a fire at his house in Thimmaraiyappa Circle near Kengeri in west Bengaluru early Thursday.

Mylarappa, the victim, stayed with his grandson, a labourer, in a small house located in a tenement. The adjacent houses were occupied by other members of his family.

Police said Mylarappa was sleeping in a 10x6sqft room Wednesday night. Around 2.15am, residents saw smoke coming out from the room and alerted the family.

Ramya, granddaughter of Mylarappa, told police she received a call from a relative, Bhagyamma, around 2.20am, who informed her about the fire. Ramya, who stayed in the adjacent house with her husband, Kumar, rushed outside. With the help of family members in the tenement and neighbours, they doused the flames by pouring water with buckets.

Kumar climbed the building, broke the asphalt sheets on the roof and entered the house to find Mylarappa dead.

Ramya said her grandfather had gangrene and his left leg was cut by doctors.

Consider petition of couple raising abandoned kid: HC

Times News Network

ADOPTION BATTLE

Bengaluru: A Shivamogga couple, who raised an abandoned child for nearly 10 years after their own disabled baby had died, have received a shot in the arm in their battle for adoption. The high court directed the authorities to consider their application after undertaking the inquiry process.

Justice DK Singh passed the order while disposing of the petition filed by the couple. The petitioners challenged the proceedings initiated by the Child Welfare Committee (CWC), Shivamogga, in 2017.

According to the petitioners, the child was abandoned at Gari Siddheshwara Swami mutt three days after birth, and the seer of the mutt gave the baby to their custody on June 10, 2016. He is now studying in fourth standard. They claimed the boy should be allowed to be adopted by them, and the denial of the same would be inhuman. They submitted that their own child, born disabled, died 12 years ago, when it was just four months old.

Justice DK Singh observed that the court is of the opinion that the paramount interest of the child's welfare, care and protection would be secured in the hands of the petitioners who looked after the boy as their own. Maybe for procedural and legal oversight, they could not reach the committee as mandated in Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules, 2016, the judge added.

The court told the petitioners to produce the child before the committee in Bengaluru on March 10. The committee shall proceed with the inquiry to see whether the interest and welfare of the boy is secured in the custody of the petitioners. The application for the adoption should also be processed soon after the committee completes its inquiry. If the petitioners are found eligible, the child should be given to them in adoption, the court said.

The Central Adoption Resource Authority, Bengaluru, is required to process the application expeditiously once the panel completes its inquiry. "It is needless to say that the child should remain in the custody of the petitioners during the inquiry to be conducted by CWC," Justice Singh said.

Police save homemaker wanting to jump into lake

Bengaluru: Staffers from a patrolling Hoysala vehicle rescued a homemaker who was walking towards Bellandur lake with an intention of jumping into it.

The homemaker from Iblur called the police control room, saying she wanted to end her life over domestic issues. "ASI Chandrashekhar and head constable Lal Saab, attached with Hoysala 189, rushed to the woman's house, but she wasn't there. When we called on her mobile, the woman said she was near Bellandur lake. The two rescued her. She was counselled before reuniting with her family," an officer said. TNN

METRO WRAP

Power cut near Yelahanka

Power supply will be affected Saturday, 11am to 6pm, in and around Yelahanka and the following areas: KMF, Yelahanka New Town, Allalasandra, Sharadhanagar, Marutinagar, Kogilu, BB Road, Bagalur Cross, Dwaraka Nagar, Tippu Circle, Kaveri Layout, Defence Layout, HMT Layout.

Fire breaks out near RBI compound wall

A fire broke out when sparks from a welding machine touched dry branches of a tree close to the compound wall of Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Nrupatunga Road, Thursday evening. There were no casualties. Iron grills on the compound wall were being repaired using the machine when the fire broke out, sources said.

3-day music festival at Chowdiah Memorial Hall

The sixth edition of Uduga Music Festival will be held from Feb 20-22 at Chowdiah Memorial Hall from 7pm. Eminent artists like Parveen Sultana, Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, Purbayan Chatterjee, Thiruvazhur Bakthavathsalam, Shashank Subramanyam will perform. For more details, call 9886383872/ 7899882200.

BWSSB chief part of global smart water group

Smart Water Networks Forum (SWAN), a global voice for smart water sector, appointed BWSSB chairman Ram Prasath Manohar to its 5th senior utility advisory group. He is the only Indian, joining experts representing utilities from Australia, Canada, Portugal, Brazil and US.

Woman falls for costly V-Day gift bait from 'doctor settled in Belgium', cheated of ₹1.3L

Chaithanya.Swamy
@timesofindia.com

STAY ALERT, STAY SAFE
- Verify identities with video calls and independent background checks
- Check with official courier or customs websites before paying any fee
- Never transfer money to get gift released from customs or for foreign parcel clearance
- Don't trust callers claiming to be customs officials without written proof

#DontGetScammed
Gift TOI to your loved ones and protect them from scams. Call 80 69 124 124

Bengaluru: A Valentine's Day promise turned into a costly heartbreak for a 34-year-old divorcee, who lost over Rs 1.3 lakh in a gift parcel scam orchestrated by fraudsters, posing as a foreign doctor and customs officials.

Anusha (name changed), a resident of Veeranapalya, north Bengaluru, told police she had registered on a matrimonial portal for divorcees when she was contacted by a man identifying himself as Shiva Vishnu Surendra. Claiming to be a doctor settled in Belgium, he quickly struck up friendly conversations and began speaking to her regularly on WhatsApp, building trust.

As Valentine's Day (Feb 14) approached, Surendra told her he had sent expensive gifts and euros to India as a token of love. Two days later, she received a call from another number. The caller introduced himself as a customs official and said a parcel containing costly gifts and foreign currency had arrived in her name, but was being held back due to pending clearance charges.

What followed was a classic escalation tactic. The fraudsters demanded payments under various pretexts including customs duty, tax clearance and courier handling charges. Reassured by Surendra multiple times, Anusha transferred over Rs 1.3 lakh. Her suspicion was triggered only when the callers continued to demand more money.

When she questioned Surendra, he urged her to pay, further reinforcing the deception. Realising she had been duped, Anusha approached police.

A senior officer said such frauds are usually reported in the run-up to Valentine's Day or in the week following it. Similar cases have been reported in Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Kochi, where victims were lured by profiles online, claiming to be NRI professionals.

Former student, now class 7 boy, wrecks school garden over grudge

Kevin.Mendonsa
@timesofindia.com

Unable to shake off an old classroom punishment, a former student allegedly returned to his old govt school in Kolnadu village, Mangaluru, and vented his anger on its kitchen garden, destroying vegetable plants meant for midday meals.

The incident occurred at the Govt Higher Primary School, Mankude, in Bantwal taluk, between Feb 7 and 8.

About 25 chilli plants and 25 brinjal plants were uprooted, damaging the garden that supplements meals for 85 students. "We filed a complaint then, but the case remained unsolved. Only later did we learn that a former student, now studying in class 7 at a private school, was responsible. He eventually admitted to the act," headmaster B Thimmappa Naik said.

Naik said the boy had studied at the govt school from classes 1 to 3. The teacher who had punished him then is no longer with the school.

The school called the boy's mother and the matter was settled amicably without any legal action. Students of the school, who had planted and tended the garden, were upset with the boy, said Naik.

Law dept to study SIR impact, submit report to govt by Feb 28

▸ Continued from page 1

In a letter issued Thursday, the EC said: "Since SIR in the above states/UTs is expected to start from April 2026, you are requested to complete preparatory work at the earliest."

The state law department has been authorised to study SIR and submit its report to the govt by Feb 28. While the cabinet, in its meeting on Feb 12, "discussed SIR at length", law and parliamentary affairs minister HK Patil said no conclusive decision was taken. The law department's report is expected to form the basis for the govt's consent or lack of it to the ECI.

Civil society organisations have stepped up opposition to the exercise, describing SIR as "an electoral genocide".

Karnataka chief electoral officer V Anbukumar said, "Preparations include training BLOs, equipping them with kits, and mapping voters. Mapping is different from verification, which happens during SIR. It involves enlisting eligible voters using the 2002 voter list and 2025 revised list. We check if interstate voters have moved into Karnataka and map them to their last constituency, and also map their children. Over 3.8 crore voters have been covered so far."

Six troupes, 50-year legacy: Kannada theatre festival kicks off tomorrow

Tina.Shashikanth
@timesofindia.com

HONOURING LEGENDS: Actors Lokesh as Aziz and CR Simha as Tughlaq during the performance of 'Tughlaq' in 1988. The play was staged in honour of Girish Karnad's Jnanpith Award

LINEUP: MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Feb 21	Sharmishte by Ranga Sampada
Feb 22	Bhagavanthana Marana by Samudaya
Feb 23	Neenaganaadi by Nataranga
Feb 24	Money Ye Devaru by Kala Gangotri
Feb 25	Belagina Kanasu by Spandana
Feb 26	Jokumaraswamy by Benaka

WHERE: Ravindra Kalakshetra
WHEN: 6pm onwards

Bengaluru: A theatre spectacle will unfold at Ravindra Kalakshetra from Feb 21 to 26, bringing together six iconic groups which have a legacy of five decades, as part of Honnaru Rangotsava theatre. The event is a celebration of modern Kannada theatre which has shaped the state's cultural scene.

The six groups are Ranga Sampada, Samudaya, Nataranga, Kalagangothri, Spandana and Benaka. Kannada theatre personalities Srinivas G Kappanna and VM Nagesh are coordinating the show, with support from actor and former minister Umashree.

Honnaru means 'The golden six' in Kannada, and the festival digs deep into a fertile stretch of Kannada theatre history. Srinivas G Kappanna, a veteran and one of the festival's conveners, said it all started ages ago, with roots in tribal and folk performance, before morphing into professional theatre that thrived on mythological and social themes.

The real spark for these six groups came in Sept 1988. That's when 13 amateur groups from Bengaluru, led by R Nagesh and directed by B Chandrashekhar, came together to stage Girish Karnad's Tughlaq. That production was a game-changer. Staging Tughlaq wasn't just another show — it was a phenomenon.

Back then, the idea of so many amateur groups working together was unheard of. Tughlaq put Karnad on the map as a playwright and made stalwarts like CR Simha and Lokesh household names. For Kappanna, it was a personal turning point — he discovered lighting design, a field nobody in Kannada theatre had really explored.

The show's success proved that people wanted serious, literary theatre. And that hunger just grew.

The early 1970s transformed Kannada theatre as BV Karanth's bold productions and the 1972 National Theatre Festival spurred new groups and talents like Prasanna, CGK, B Jayashree, S Malathi and Shankar Nag. Writers like Chandrashekhar Kambar, P Lankesh and HS Shivaprakash deepened discourse, while theatre evolved into a platform for debate and protest during the Emergency.

But then came television. Things changed fast. The long lines for tickets at Ravindra Kalakshetra disappeared. Suddenly, theatre was competing with a glowing box in every household. For a while, the whole movement nearly collapsed. Still, the passion of artists kept it alive. And, oddly enough, as TV content got bland and predictable, people found their way back to the raw, electric experience of live theatre.

That's the legacy Honnaru Rangotsava aims to celebrate and keep alive. These six days are a tribute to the trailblazers — playwrights who gave Kannada theatre its voice, the directors who gave it shape, and the actors who brought it all to life.

BJP issues gag after tussle with JD(S) over CM face

Times News Network

Bengaluru: Karnataka BJP's core committee Thursday issued instructions to party functionaries not to make public statements on the party's alliance with JD(S).

The decision comes on the back of senior functionaries in BJP and JD(S) issuing statements on a possible chief ministerial candidate of the NDA in Karnataka, resulting in a war of words.

Hours earlier, at the party's state executive meeting, former CM and party veteran BS Yediyurappa, 82, had exhorted workers to ensure BJP forms the govt "independently" in the 2028 assembly elections. The comment was significant since senior functionaries from both parties have indicated the tie-up with JD(S) could extend to 2028.

Although BJP was in office for two terms, it has never secured a majority on its own, with Yediyurappa becoming CM with the support of independents or defectors through 'Operation Lotus'.

Yediyurappa, who was feted for completing 50 years in politics, said he intends to remain active in the party. "God willing, I will tour the state for another five or six years," he said.

'Governance failures'

Meanwhile, Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and national general secretary Radhamohan Das Agarwal attacked the Congress govt over alleged corruption and governance failures.

Shekhawat, who inaugurated the meeting, was confident BJP would secure a majority in 2028. He said the meeting was not merely an organisational gathering but also an exercise in introspection and assessment.

He claimed the state had "become corrupt and financially bankrupt", referring to alleged scams over the past 1,000 days since Congress has been in office. Agarwal alleged Muslims were being given better opportunities compared to Scheduled Castes and called the Congress administration "corrupt and discriminatory".

Some 1,250 functionaries participated in the meeting.

Candidates soon

At the core committee meeting later — attended by state president BY Vijayendra, Yediyurappa and Agarwal — members resolved to kick start the process of selecting candidates for bypolls to Bagalkot and Davanagere South assembly seats and MLC elections.

"We will shortlist candidates soon. Central party brass will take the final call," said senior BJP MLA.

TOI

BIGWIGS: BS Yediyurappa with Union ministers Shobha Karandlaje and Gajendra Singh Shekhawat at the meeting on Thursday

Brand B'luru now 'waste B'luru': BJP

BJP's state executive committee Thursday accused the Congress govt of turning Brand Bengaluru into "waste Bengaluru" and questioned whether it had any qualms over worsening civic conditions in the city.

In a resolution, it said deputy CM DK Shivakumar had promised to transform Bengaluru into a global city but claimed the vision had "failed", with policy lapses and real estate-driven expansion pushing Bengaluru towards "collapse".

The resolution alleged the govt was promoting large real estate projects such as the 5,800-acre Queen City without a comprehensive plan to manage population pressure. It alleged projects such as the Rs 500 crore skydeck, Rs 12,690 crore tunnel road were driven by commissions rather than public interest.

On traffic, it claimed 40% of the city's 12,000km road network was damaged, average travel speeds had dropped to 15kmph, and commuters spend 2-3 hours daily in traffic.

The resolution alleged failures in water and drainage systems and said sewage treatment capacity stood at 1,500MLD against a requirement of 2,500MLD, leading to flooding.

It critiqued the govt on solid waste management and law and order, alleging more than 50,000 criminal cases were registered annually. The party demanded immediate elections to Greater Bengaluru Authority and warned of protests if polls are delayed.

Another resolution alleged widespread corruption, leadership failure and cited scams under the Gruha Lakshmi scheme.

A resolution also welcomed the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission.

Plan to replace EVMs with ballot paper divides Cong

BV.Shivashankar@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: The govt's decision to use ballot paper instead of electronic voting machines (EVMs) in upcoming zilla and taluk panchayat polls has triggered unease within governing Congress.

The govt plans to give legal sanctity to the move with Priyank Kharge, rural development and panchayat raj minister, saying the Karnataka Gram Swaraj (Amendment) Bill, 2026, is ready and will be tabled in both Houses of the legislature during the budget session beginning March 6.

"The intention is to ensure credibility of elections and bring in much-needed transparency to voting and counting processes," Priyank said. "The Centre failed to address our concerns about EVMs which forced us to prepare ballot papers."

While the chief electoral officer under the Election Commission of India conducts assembly and parliamentary polls, the SEC independently oversees elections to rural and urban local bodies. In line with Congress' national campaign against EVMs, the govt plans to give the Karnataka State Election Commission (SEC) the option of using either EVMs or ballot papers in local body polls. The govt has already amended the Greater Bengaluru Governance Act to permit ballot papers in civic polls to the five city corporations.

But a section of Congress legislators has reservations, arguing the move could revive perceptions of electoral manipulation. Deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar's brother and former MP DK Suresh recently said the shift would take the system a step back. He recently reiterated that he stands by his statement.

TOI

BOXED IN: Many say the decision to use ballot paper would take the system several steps back

Many lawmakers privately cite the Malur assembly seat case as evidence of EVM reliability. Congress MLA KY Nanje Gowda's election, initially set aside by the high court after a recount, was upheld by the Supreme Court last week after the apex court examined the counting process. He won the 2023 polls by 248 votes against BJP's KS Manjunathgowda.

Nanje Gowda credited EVMs for the verdict, saying his case demonstrated the system's accuracy. He said data from the control unit, VVPAT and booth-level agents matched precisely, while a minor discrepancy emerged in manually counted postal ballots. "It's a case in point. But as a disciplined worker, I will toe the line of my party," he said.

However, SEC officials defended the govt's proposal, saying existing EVMs are 15 years old and due for disposal. "Using ballot papers is not unconstitutional as the Constitution provides the option to use either EVM or ballot paper," state election commissioner GS Sangreshi said. "When ballot paper is used in gram panchayat polls, why not use them for ZP-TP polls?"

SHORT TAKES

Give sops to women marrying ryots: MLA

HD Ranganath, Congress MLA from Kunigal, urged the govt to provide special incentives for women marrying farmers. In a letter to CM Siddaramaiah, he urged the govt to address what he called a growing problem within the farming community. "There is a situation where no one wants an alliance with a farmer in rural areas," Ranganath said. A farmers' group had made the same appeal during a meeting with the CM.

Karnataka signs LoI with VivaTech

The state signed a letter of intent with VivaTech, Europe's leading startup and innovation event, to create a structured Europe-India startup and innovation corridor anchored by the Bengaluru Tech Summit. The LoI was signed by the department of electronics, IT/BT and science & technology on the sidelines of the AI Summit in Delhi.

Siddaramaiah highlights AI push

With the AI Impact Summit on in Delhi, CM Siddaramaiah revealed an AI push, saying: "Our govt is investing Rs 50cr in a centre for applied AI, deploying Rs 50cr-worth of AI-enabled public systems, introducing AI-based court transcription, and expanding AI-driven learning in govt schools."

Govt lifts price limits on library books

Pearl.DSouza@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Public libraries in the state can finally stock works of Booker Prize winner Banu Mushtaq and other popular writers following an overhaul of Karnataka's book procurement system that removes long-standing price caps and expands reader-driven purchases.

The libraries department, in an order Wednesday, lifted price limits that restricted acquisition of high-demand titles, including bestsellers and competitive exam guides. The reform also expands reader-demand procurement from 10% to 40%, after **TOI** reported in Dec that students were procuring their own exam preparation books due to outdated collections in libraries. Officials said the changes could revive readership in govt libraries over time. "It marks a historic shift in the way we procure books, after nearly 20 years," an official said.

Earlier, libraries could purchase up to 10% of books based on reader demand in city and district libraries, but strict price and specification limits applied. Book dimensions and remuneration per page were fixed, and titles that failed to meet the criteria were not placed before state and district-level committees.

The new system allows "only the latest edition" of bestsellers, competitive exam books and other titles to be purchased, regardless of cost.

In the 2022 procurement process currently underway, not a single book was selected in the competitive exam and textbook segments. Of the 3,965 books procured, 3,065 were literature titles, with funds earmarked for other segments remaining unused and eventually diverted to literature.

"Now, this balance will shift," officials said. "Several competitive exam books and bestsellers by authors such as SL Bhyrappa and Mushtaq, which earlier did not fall within the price limits, can now be purchased."

Lists generated from libraries will be vetted by district-level committees. "Readers can now place requests with the chief librarian," said Basavarajendra H, commissioner, department of public libraries. "We will streamline these demands. District committees that give final approval will be re-constituted to include academics and representatives of book-reading clubs. Readers can expect books within a month."

"The new arrivals segment is bound to infuse more life into govt libraries and strengthen reading habits. These were once popular hubs for improving language and critical thinking," Basavarajendra said, adding that the impact would be visible over the next five years.

"This is a welcome change, considering most libraries are not updated and often only have inexpensive books," said Jayanna, Bengaluru district secretary, All India Democratic Youth Organisation. "If expensive books in high demand are on shelves, several students who otherwise would not be exposed to them, can access them."

He said expanding libraries to hobli levels will help futhur incentivise reading.

Urban farming boom, NRI holdings add to land crunch for industrial projects

Sandeep.Moudgal@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: The rise of urban farming and campaigns to conserve farmland are triggering concerns over land availability for industrialisation, with officials warning of a growing crunch for large infrastructure and renewable energy projects.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, the govt acquired over 24,000 acres of land in and around Bengaluru, but officials said it has since struggled to make more acquisitions.

Educated urban buyers acquiring agricultural land and activists seeking to protect farmland are contributing to what some officials describe as a "developing land bank crisis". While some stakeholders argue the trend is limited to small land parcels, others say it is beginning to affect projects that require large contiguous tracts of irrigated or barren land.

A senior industry department official said maintaining land banks is becoming increasingly difficult due to higher compensation demands, especially for cultivable land under floriculture and horticulture, and because of fragmented land parcels that need to be excluded.

Getty Images

SUNSHINE GONE: Officials say the situation is especially worrying for solar projects since many owners reside abroad and are unwilling to part with land

Some officials, though, said acquisition challenges are being addressed at the planning stage. "Even before we notify, certain aspects are considered including fully grown trees, land activity and other environmental issues," said S Selvakumar, additional chief secretary (industries). "While there are concerns over some bits and pieces, KIADB and the industries department has been able to keep track of what parcels are being acquired."

Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Ltd (KREDL) staff say the situation is especially worrying for solar projects. "Some owners are abroad and are holding on to agricultural land for posterity," a KREDL official said. "In Pavagada, we have owners who are in the UK and US, and they have no intention of parting with their land. At least 40% of existing solar parks also has ownership vested with NRIs and urban rich."

Officials added that despite the state's high potential for solar and wind power, projects are facing constraints due to land availability. "As a result, KREDL is looking at smaller parks and more compact renewable energy generation units," an official said.

Officials also pointed to resistance from sections that supported farmer protests as another challenge for large-scale projects. They cited protests in the proposed ITIR region in Devanahalli last year.

"These romanticised versions of protecting fields will only hurt farmers," a minister said. "In fact, when the govt declared it a special agriculture zone, sections of the same farmers were ready to part with their land for the ITIR. We decided not to proceed with it and asked them to keep their land."

After the Karnataka Land Reforms Act was amended in 2020, non-agriculturists were allowed to legally purchase agricultural land. The amendment repealed restrictions that limited buyers to farming backgrounds. Now, individuals, regardless of non-agricultural income, can buy farmland, though conversion for residential or commercial use requires separate, mandatory approvals.

TIMES TRIBUTE

PAYING HOMAGE TO THE DEPARTED SOUL

To book your ad
Logon to: ads.timesofindia.com
or Call: 18001205474 (Toll Free)
Scan QR Code

REMEMBRANCE
SHARING MEMORIES

FOND REMEMBRANCE
Sri. Venkataramanappa
Left us on 20-02-06

"We pray almighty to bless your soul with eternal peace and happiness. We love & Cherish all the moments shared with you" You are in our hearts and memory always.
Your loss can never be compensated.
Wife Dr. L Chandramma, Son. V.L Nithin, Veena, Manasvi.

TO BOOK AN OBITUARY AD PLEASE CALL
18001205474 (Toll Free)
TO BOOK ONLINE LOG ON TO
Ads.timesofindia.com

TO BOOK AN OBITUARY AD PLEASE CALL
18001205474 (Toll Free)
TO BOOK ONLINE LOG ON TO
Ads.timesofindia.com

TO BOOK AN OBITUARY AD
PLEASE CALL
18001205474 (Toll Free)
TO BOOK ONLINE LOG ON TO
Ads.timesofindia.com
Scan QR Code

BOOK OBITUARY ADS
To book an Obituary Ad
Please contact:
Bharat
7760833522
TO BOOK ONLINE LOG ON TO
Ads.timesofindia.com
EXCLUSIVE OFFERS AND ASSISTANCE
SCAN TO BOOK

TO BOOK AN OBITUARY AD PLEASE CALL
18001205474 (Toll Free)
TO BOOK ONLINE LOG ON TO
Ads.timesofindia.com

TO BOOK AN OBITUARY AD PLEASE CALL
18001205474 (Toll Free)
TO BOOK ONLINE LOG ON TO
Ads.timesofindia.com

OBITUARY

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS

REST IN PEACE

C.J KUNCHERIA
08-11-1940 - 18-02-2026
Viewing at our Residence 7:30 am, 20-02-2026
Address: No 246, 5th Main, Subhash Nagar P.O, Bangalore
Funeral at 10:30am, 20-02-2026
St. Anthony's Shrine, TC Palya

DEATH ANNIVERSARY

13th Anniversary

Smt. Savithri C Hebli
Born: 06.01.1936
Death: 20.02.2013
We miss you, your love and affection for everybody around you, your recollections, your wisdom, your strength of character, your laughter and your concern for all of us. We forever feel and cherish your presence around us.
C.S.HEBLI
(Retd. Technical Director) KPCLtd., Family & Friends

OBITUARY

REMEMBRANCES

Smt. K R Vijayalakshmi
(25th April 1934 to 26th January 2025)
We regret to inform you of the demise of Smt KR Vijayalakshmi. She was a lawyer, administrator and leader par excellence. She will be missed by all who had the opportunity to know her.
Vasudev Aatre, Lalitha Srinivasan, K R Suresh and families

In Loving Memory

CHRISTINA
15-06-1945 - 20-02-2025
Forever in our hearts, your love and values will continue to guide us every day.
Remembered by: Family members and loved ones.

SAD DEMISE

Chautha

With a heavy heart we inform the sad demise of Smt. Indra S Kalra on 18th Feb 2026. CHAUTHA ceremony will be held on Friday, 20th Feb 2026 between 5:00 & 5:30PM @ Sindhi School, Kumara Krupa Road.
In Grief
Shamdas R Kalra
Kamal (Madhu) & Lachand Narang
Sujata & Sushil Kalra
Gitanjali & Mahesh Kalra
Grand Children:
Ritika & Sagar Narang
Rohit & Rashmi Kalra
Lakshay & Shaurya Narang

TO BOOK AN OBITUARY AD
PLEASE CALL
18001205474 (Toll Free)
TO BOOK ONLINE LOG ON TO
Ads.timesofindia.com
Scan QR Code

IN LASTING TRIBUTE

Mr. C. J. Kuncheria

Former Secretary, XIME Society (Served: 2005-2023)
Born on: 08 - 11 - 1940 | Died on: 18 - 02 - 2026

The XIME family pays its homage to his lasting contribution to the growth of the institution.

Xavier Institute Of Management & Entrepreneurship

Employer should pay interest on relief: HC

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

The judge said where the insurance policy excludes payments towards medical expenses, the insurer cannot be fastened with liability contrary to the contract

Bengaluru: The Employee's Compensation Act (EC Act) does not treat medical expenses as a component of "compensation" payable and, hence, reimbursement of medical expenses is not a statutory liability imposed on the insurer under the law.

EMPLOYEE'S COMPENSATION ACT

The high court made this observation while modifying the award passed in a case arising from Ranebennur. In his order, Justice K Manmadha Rao also held that the liability to pay interest on the compensation rests solely upon the employer, not on the insurer.

Claimant Bettappa was employed as a labourer in Satish Ginning Factory at Ranebennur. While on duty in Oct 2013, both his hands came in contact with a cotton baling machine, resulting in crushing and amputation. He spent more than Rs 6 lakh on his treatment. He then filed a petition seeking compensation of Rs 30 lakh, with an interest of 18% per annum and costs.

In Dec 2017, the commissioner under the EC Act, Ranebennur, awarded Rs 16.7 lakh with a 12% interest to Bettappa, payable by National Insurance Company.

The insurer challenged the order, contending that the policy was purely an Indemnity contract, under which the primary statutory liability to pay compensation rests upon the employer.

Justice Rao noted that the insurance policy expressly excluded liability towards payment of interest and that no additional premium was paid to cover such a liability.

The judge pointed out that, where the insurance policy specifically excludes liability towards medical expenses incurred for treatment of injuries sustained by an employee, and no premium is paid for such coverage, the insurer cannot be fastened with liability contrary to the terms of the contract. However, the judge concurred with the calculation of wages of Bettappa for determining compensation by the tribunal and directed that the claimant was entitled to Rs 8.6 lakh in compensation, to be paid by the insurer.

Day 1: No safari over absence of guidelines

Shrinivasa.M@timesofindia.com

Mysuru: A day after Karnataka govt announced resumption of safari services, the forest dept did not resume rides in conflict-hit Nagarahole and Bandipur tiger reserves Thursday due to absence of guidelines and multiple farmer protests across districts in Old Mysuru region.

FARMERS PROTEST

There were no enquiries — both offline and online — from tourists about safari relaunch. Sources claimed the govt is yet to issue an order regarding the revised safari structure, including the number of vehicles to be deployed, timings and routes.

Several farmers' groups held protests in Mysuru and Bandipur, urging the govt to reconsider its decision on restarting rides. In Bandipur, Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha's Chamarajanagar district unit chief Honnur Prakash said after the safaris were suspended in Nov 2025 due to back-to-back animal-human conflicts, there have been no instances of animal attacks in the region.

In Mysuru city, State Federation of Farmers' Organisations staged a protest in front of Aranya Bhawan.

Organisation president Hallikeerebandi Bhagyaraj called the govt's decision "anti-farmer, anti-animal and anti-forest". He accused the govt of playing with the lives of farmers and forest-dwelling communities to promote industry-friendly policies in tourism and recreation sectors.

A farmers' protest at Melkamanahalli Gate, the entry point to Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Gundlupet taluk of Chamarajanagar district, turned chaotic after a group of locals staged a counter-demonstration in support of the safari.

Begur police detained farmers and released them later in the day.

On the other side of the fence, the resumption of service was welcomed by tourism stakeholders, including travel agencies and resorts.

26 K'taka tribals held in Ghana for selling herbal products

Bengaluru: A routine overseas business trip to sell traditional herbal products ended in jail for 26 members of Karnataka's Haikki-Pikki tribal community in Ghana.

Days after a separate group was arrested in Chad for alleged visa violations, these 26 tribals — including 13 women from Shivamogga and Davanagere districts — were taken into custody Wednesday in Tamale, in Ghana's Upper West region, for allegedly selling unregistered herbal products.

Confirming the development, Karnataka Haikki-Pikki Budakattu Sanghatane president R Paneeth Kumar said, "All of them are in the custody of local police. While we are not in direct touch with the arrested tribals, one of us in Ghana is coordinating with them." TNN

Transport unions reject govt move

Bengaluru: Trade unions representing employees of state-run road transport corporations (STCs) rejected the govt's decision to release 36 months of salary arrears and revise wages with effect from April 1, 2025.

Hundreds of employees participated in 'Bengaluru Chalo' protest at Freedom Park Thursday under the joint action committee of Karnataka State Road Transport Employees' Unions. The unions set March 2 as the deadline for the govt to convene a meeting with their representatives. TNN

Man tries to kill pregnant sis with axe over inter-caste marriage

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Koppal: A man allegedly attempted to kill his sister, who is four months pregnant, in Handral village Wednesday evening. She is now undergoing treatment.

According to sources, it is a case of inter-caste marriage, and the woman's family opposed her marriage to a person from another caste. Meenakshi Halligudi, 22, from Chitnapur village, married Udaya Talwar from the same village.

Meenakshi is a Kuruba, while Udaya is from the Valmiki community. They fell in love and got married about a year ago. However, Meenakshi's family did not give its approval. The couple moved to Bengaluru and came to Handral village to attend the wedding of Udaya's brother Wednesday.

Meenakshi's brother, Manjunath Halligudi, rushed to venue and allegedly attacked her with an axe. As she ran towards the main stage, Manjunath chased her, but people present at the wedding overpowered him.

Koppal SP Ram L Arasidi said Manjunath was arrested.

Saving blues: How bizman fought for zero-balance a/cs

Anesh.S@timesofindia.com

Parameshwaran Iyer wrote to Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla highlighting the concerns about penalties on bank customers for not maintaining minimum balance

Bengaluru: In a recently published report, Lok Sabha petitions committee recommended that banks across the country should not levy penalties for non-maintenance of minimum balance. With several nationalised banks already allowing zero-balance savings accounts, a Bengalurean was at the forefront of the fight for the cause.

Parameshwaran Krishna Iyer, 47, founder of city-based firm Bamboopecker, noticed a crisis his employees dealt with every month: A considerable amount would be deducted from their salaries.

Whenever his employees got their salaries, they would send part of the money back home and withdraw the rest for their expenses. Because of this, little would be left in their accounts and they could not maintain the minimum balance, he explained.

In one instance, an employee sought travel expenses to come back to Bengaluru from his leave. "We sent him money and he was only able to use half of it. His account had a negative balance," Parameshwaran recalled.

Convinced that this was not a fair practice, the entrepreneur, in 2024, decided to approach Reserve Bank of India, which did not work out.

After days of pondering and research, Parameshwaran learnt that addressing the issue in Parliament could be the most effective solution. On Aug 18 of that year, he wrote a petition to Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla, highlighting the concerns along with recommendations and suggestions.

In his three-page letter, he asked why banks allowed customers to withdraw below the minimum balance and then collected a penalty. If banks wanted their customers to maintain a minimum balance, they should not let them withdraw below the threshold, Parameshwaran said.

As months went by, the Kerala-born man did not receive any response, which made him write to the then Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud. However, behind the scenes, work already began by March 2025, with the finance committee issuing an official memorandum on the matter. By June, responses were sought from the department of financial services on the reasons for the levy of such penalties, attaching his petition.

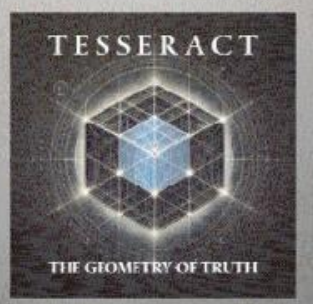
According to data revealed by the department, Rs 122 crore was collected by public sector banks in penalties within Karnataka for financial year 2024-25 alone. Among private banks, HDFC collected the highest such charges at Rs 1,112 crore at the national level in a single financial year.

Parameshwaran's pursuit and follow-ups already started to show positive signs, with many public sector banks, including SBI and PNB, starting to permit zero-balance savings accounts. In Dec last year, the Lok Sabha petitions committee came up with 47 recommendations, with several of them replicating those initially addressed by the CV Raman Nagar resident.

187 years
Bennett & Coleman
THE TIMES OF INDIA

The Birth of Potential

From our patterns,
another form of thought emerges,
Drawn from our memories
and shaped by our contradictions
Not beneath us, not above us, but alongside us



A Spectacle Of
Music, Dance & Drama

16 to 22 March 2026
Jamshed Bhabha Theatre, NCPA, Mumbai

Tickets available on bookmyshow

India, we've been listening.
You've been curious, intrigued, challenged.
Exactly as we intended.

We invite you to experience Tesseract..
in Mumbai.

For guests travelling to Mumbai by air, The Times of India Group will reimburse 80% of your travel fare, up to the value of your Tesseract show ticket.

This offer is applicable on ₹10,000 and ₹15,000 seat categories only.

tesseract@timesofindia.com

TIMES NATION

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2026

PM MODI COMMITTED TO RETURN OF KASHMIRI PANDITS WITH DIGNITY AND SECURITY: LG SINHA

CLIMATE CHANGE IS THE BIGGEST GLOBAL THREAT; SOCIETY MUST SHARE RESPONSIBILITY: CHOUHAN

Bengal BLO dies after his name appears on SIR re-check list

Malda: A 56-year-old teacher in Malda, Bengal, who worked as a booth level officer (BLO) in the ongoing revision of electoral rolls, fell ill late Wednesday and died a few hours later, **reports Subhro Maitra.**

His family alleged Mohammad Anikul Alam was already struggling with SIR workload. They claimed that Alam became severely distressed on Wednesday after receiving a list from BDO office containing 44 names that could not be mapped and required rechecking. To his shock, his own name, despite being a regular voter for years, also featured on that list.

Alam was a geography teacher at Kaliachak High School and lived in Sujapur for 35 years despite having ancestral roots in Harishchandrapur. Alam was taken to a primary health centre when he fell ill. He was released after treatment. But his condition deteriorated overnight, and he suffered a heart attack at home. He died at a nursing home on Thursday morning.

Ph 3 of spl intensive voter roll revision likely in April

EC Tells 22 States & UTs To Begin Preparatory Work

Bharti.Jain@timesofindia.com

Phase 3 of SIR shall coincide with houselisting stage of Census 2027, to be held between April 1 and Sept 30 this year

New Delhi: Election Commission is planning to commence the third round of special intensive revision (SIR) in April. While the first phase of SIR was exclusive to Bihar, Phase 2 covered a dozen states and Union territories (UTs).

EC on Thursday wrote to chief electoral officers (CEOs) of the 22 remaining states/UTs, requesting them to complete the preparatory work related to SIR at the earliest, saying that the SIR process in their respective states/UTs "is expected to start from April 2026".

The states/UTs mentioned in the EC communication include Manipur and Uttarakhand, where the terms of current assemblies will expire in March 2027. Others on the list are Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Sikkim, Tripura and Telangana; besides the UTs of Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu, Ladakh and Delhi.

Weeks before the poll panel announced Phase 2 of SIR on Oct 27, 2025, it had similarly written to CEOs of all states/UTs except Bihar, asking them to initiate pre-SIR activities. However, SIR was announced for only 12 states/UTs. This indicates that not all 22 states/UTs where SIR is pending may be clubbed in Phase 3, even though their total electorate strength is around 39 crore, far less than the 60 crore already covered in Phase 1 and 2.

Phase 3 may continue till June or early July in the event of extensions.

Significantly, Phase 3 of SIR shall coincide with the houselisting stage of Census 2027, to be held over a 45-day timeframe between April 1 and Sept 30 this year, as individually notified by the states/UTs. Some states like Delhi, Haryana and Odisha that have already notified their houselisting timelines may thus need to revise these timelines or request EC for inclusion in the next phase of SIR. Some states/UTs that have not yet notified houselisting dates may choose to schedule the first phase of census after June-July or request that SIR be conducted in a later phase.

Assembly polls in Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana and Manipur, all due in March 2027, shall also happen too close to the population enumeration stage of Census 2027, expected between Feb 9 and 28 next year. This may require EC to prepone the polling to Jan or early Feb. As for UP, its assembly's term expires only in May 2027.

4-year-old gets locked inside classroom, found next morning

Nagpur: A boy (4) was accidentally locked inside his classroom overnight in Nagpur, sparking panic in his family. Himanshu Bagde, who lives just half a kilometre from the school, wandered into the classroom while playing Wednesday, **reports Soumitra Bose.**

When Himanshu did not return home, his father Vishwajit Bagde lodged a missing complaint. Police launched a search operation across residential areas, abandoned structures, rivers and streams, nearby schools and Anganwadi centres, and neighbouring regions. The boy's photo and details were circulated through media channels. But, he could not be traced.

Around 10am on Thursday, some of the staff members went to school and found Himanshu asleep inside locked classroom. It was a lucky escape for the boy as it was a school holiday and staff visited to oversee construction work. Police asked schools to lock classrooms after proper checks.

Man acquitted of murder after 37 years in jail, HC says verdict was flawed

Rajesh Kumar Pandey | TNN

Prayagraj: A man who spent 37 years in prison after a murder conviction, which relied on evidence that cleared his two co-accused, walked free this week after Allahabad high court set aside the trial court's 1989 judgment, saying it "suffers from infirmity".

In its Feb 18 order, the division bench of Justices Siddhartha Varma and Prashant Mishra-I directed that appellant Khunni Lal be released immediately, if not required in any other case. The verdict closes a chapter that began with a family land dispute in Uttar Pradesh's Farrukhabad district in 1987.

The legal anomaly that led to the murder conviction being overturned was of three murder suspects being tried on identical evidence, culminating in two of them being acquitted while Khunni was sentenced to life.

The high court bench noted that co-accused Bhagwan Din and Jagdish walked free from the same sessions court that put Khunni away despite the available evidence suggesting the same degree of culpability.

The case has its roots in a boundary dispute. Khunni and the other two men were joint owners of a plot and a house along with complainant Ram Singh, who accused them of encroaching on his portion. Violence erupted on May 9, 1987, after the three men allegedly destroyed a portion of Ram Singh's property.

Khunni allegedly carried a knife, Bhagwan a pistol and Jagdish a spear. Ram Singh's brother Mauji was nearby when the confrontation turned fatal, the evidence suggested.

As Ram Singh grabbed Jagdish's spear, the other two restrained Mauji while Khunni allegedly stabbed him to death, as per complaint. The accused fled, firing shots. The crime was reported the following day. The sessions court convicted only Khunni in May 1989.

HC seeks Sengar stand on Unnao rape survivor's plea for death

New Delhi: High court of Delhi Thursday sought the stand of former UP MLA **Kuldeep Sengar** and other convicts on a plea by Unnao rape survivor to enhance their 10-year prison term to death sentence in the 2018 custodial death case of her father.

HC issued notice to Sengar and others on the survivor's plea that a delay of over 1,940 days in filing the appeal against the 2020 trial court order on conviction and sentencing be condoned. The court, however, observed that the maintainability of the appeal has to be decided first.

In her appeal, the survivor has sought a modification of the trial court order holding the accused guilty of culpable homicide not amounting to murder, and has demanded that they be convicted for murder under IPC Section 302 and awarded death penalty. CBI said it had no objection. Sengar raped the survivor in 2017 when she was a minor. TNN

TIMES interact

Connecting People, Connecting Needs.

To book your ad | Logon to: ads.timesofindia.com or Call: 18001205474 (Toll Free) | Scan QR Code

tender & notices

TENDERS

COUNCIL FOR THE INDIAN SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS, NEW DELHI

CISCE invites proposals from suitable agencies for the printing of various textbooks and other Publications released by the Council in the format provided in the RFP document.

For details, kindly visit the "Notification" section on CISCE website www.cisce.org or scan the given QR code.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby notified that my client proposes to purchase the below mentioned Property from Sri. D.S.JAYANNA, Son of Sri. M. Sanjeevaiah also known as M. Sanjeevappa, Dibburu Village, Hesaraghatta Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, who has represented that he purchased the Schedule Property from Smt. Narayanamma and others in terms of a Sale Deed dated 22/03/2007, registered as Document No. 6820/2007-08 in Book-I and stored in C.D.No. HSRD 6 in the Office of the Sub-Registrar, Hesaraghatta, Bangalore North Taluk. Any person or persons objecting for the proposed purchase and persons who are having any right, title, interest or ownership or any other right or claim in the Schedule Property including by way of any agreement or otherwise shall lodge his/her/their objections and/or claims with the undersigned along with supporting documentary evidence within Fifteen (15) days from the date of this publication. Further, claims or alleged interest or objections if any, which are not received within Fifteen (15) days from the date of publication of this notice shall be considered to have been consciously waived or abandoned for all intents and purposes and shall no longer be binding. Any objections and/or claims and/or response received thereafter will not be binding on my client and my client will proceed to purchase Schedule Property as if there are no claims/objections.

: SCHEDULE PROPERTY:

Land measuring 01 Acre 21 Guntas and 01 Gunta of kharab land (out of Larger Property measuring 01 Acre 26 Guntas) in Sy.No. 11/1 (forming part of Old Sy.No.11) of Dibburu Village, Hesaraghatta Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk (previously Bangalore North Taluk), Bangalore Urban District and bounded by:

East : Property bearing Sy.No.12/2,

West : Remaining portion measuring 05 Guntas in Sy.No.11/1 retained by Sri. D.S.Jayanna and Property bearing Sy.No.10,

North : Property bearing Sy.No.11/2 and

South : Property bearing Sy.No.11/4, belonging to Sri. D.S. Vijayakumar

Sri. KUSUMA R. MUNIRAJU
Sri.KUSUMA KAUSHIK
Advocates,
No.101, "EDEN PARK",
No.20, Vittal Mallya Road,
Bangalore-560 001.
Tel : 080 - 22217971

Bangalore Date: 19/02/2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby notified that my client proposes to purchase the below mentioned Property from Sri. D.S. VIJAYAKUMAR, Son of Sri. M. Sanjeevaiah also known as M. Sanjeevappa, Dibburu Village, Kakoli Post, Hesaraghatta Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, who has represented that, he purchased the Schedule Property from Smt. Narayanamma and others in terms of a Sale Deed dated 20/05/2004, registered as Document No. 3282/2004-05 in Book-I and stored in the C.D.No. YAND48 in the Office of the Sub-Registrar, Yelahanka, Bangalore. Any person or persons objecting for the proposed purchase and persons who are having any right, title, interest or ownership or any other right or claim in the Schedule Property including by way of any agreement or otherwise shall lodge his/her/their objections and/or claims with the undersigned along with supporting documentary evidence within Fifteen (15) days from the date of this publication. Further, claims or alleged interest or objections if any, which are not received within Fifteen (15) days from the date of publication of this notice shall be considered to have been consciously waived or abandoned for all intents and purposes and shall no longer be binding. Any objections and/or claims and/or response received thereafter will not be binding on my client and my client will proceed to purchase Schedule Property as if there are no claims/objections.

: SCHEDULE PROPERTY:

Land measuring 00 Acre 35 Guntas (out of Larger Property measuring 01 Acre 00 Guntas) in Sy.No. 11/4 (forming part of Old Sy.Nos.11 and 11/1) of Dibburu Village, Hesaraghatta Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk (previously Bangalore North Taluk), Bangalore Urban District and bounded by:

East : Property bearing Sy.Nos.12/3 and 12/4,

West : Remaining portion measuring 05 Guntas in Sy.No.11/4 retained by Sri. D.S. Vijaya kumar and Property bearing Sy.No.10,

North : Property bearing Sy.No.11/1 belonging to Sri. D.S. Jayanna and

South : Property bearing Sy.No.11/5

Sri. KUSUMA R. MUNIRAJU
Sri.KUSUMA KAUSHIK
Advocates,
No.101, "EDEN PARK",
No.20, Vittal Mallya Road,
Bangalore-560 001.
Tel : 080 - 22217971

Bangalore Date: 19/02/2026

jobs

SITUATION VACANT

ADMINISTRATION

MANAGERS

EMPLOYMENT Opportunity for Retired, VRS HRIs, Self Employed, Teachers & Homemakers. Fixed Pay & Incentives. Contact: [illegible]

OTHER PROFESSIONALS

GRAPHICS & DSGN

WANTED Male Graphic Designer (Corel Draw Photoshop Illustrator) Pvt Ltd Company around Rajajinagar Contact: [illegible]

OTHER VACANCIES

GENERAL

THE TAMILNADU HANDLOOM WEAVERS' CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD.,

RECRUITMENT

The Tamil Nadu Handloom Weavers' Co-operative Society Ltd (Co-optex) that has it's Showrooms in Karnataka invites applications for appointment to the Post of Helper from eligible candidates.

For details visit: www.cooptex.com

Regional Manager

MULTIPLE VACANCIES

URGENTLY REQUIRED

Bangalore

Jayanagar & Koramangal

Biggest Financial Industrial Group/MNC

Part Time/ Full Time opportunities

Graduates above 30yrs.

Retired sector till 70yrs

For Financial Advisors,Dev.officers, Team Leaders etc.

Contact

8050969719

6364563490

WORK FROM HOME

EXCELLENT opportunity from A.A.A rated MNC to work from home & earn more than a lakh with travel abroad opportunity. Age 25-75. [illegible]

SITUATION VACANT

The Tamilnadu Handloom Weavers' Co-operative Society Ltd.

RECRUITMENT

The Tamilnadu Handloom Weavers' Co-operative Society Ltd (Co-optex) that has it's Showrooms in MAHARASHTRA invites applications for appointment to the Post of HELPER from eligible candidates.

For details visit : www.cooptex.com

Senior Regional Manager

auto

PRE-OWNED VEHICLES

HONDA

HONDA CITY 1.5 VX CVT (I-VTEC) 2014 for SALE GBrownM Petrol Automatic Co maintained Mint condition [illegible] km Brokers excuse 6.5 lacs Whatsapp [illegible]

real estate

BANGALORE PROPERTIES

YELAHANKA

YELAHANKA: 2BHK SALE 1350sft, Ready-to-Move, Clear Title. Opp. Metro/Amazon Office. Gated, Pool, Gym, Security. High Rental Yield. 1.48Cr*. [illegible]

RESALE 2BHK, 1134 sq.ft. North facing, main road facing semi-furnished flat, 100% Vaastu, yelahanka new town 1.6 Cr- neg [illegible]

personal

LOST & FOUND

I, Mrs Saraswathi W/O Gopala Jois No.5, 2nd Cross, Ibrahim Saheb Street, Near commercial Street, Shivajinagar, Bangalore- 560 001. have lost My Sale deed in Bangalore, registered Survey No 18/3 Year 1986 in the Office of Sub Registrar, Gubbi, Tumkur District, 572216. A Complaint is lodged with Banashankari/ Bangalore City Police Station, Bangalore. If anyone finds the above pls Contact [illegible]

I, Harshvardhan Rao.U residing at #13,6th B cross,AGS layout,Subramanya pura,Bangalore -61 here by state that I have lost my Original Khata Certificate, PID No- [illegible],site no- 927, while travelling to AGS Layout. If any one Found Please Contact the above address or Call:[illegible]

CHANGE OF NAME

I PRAVIN KUMAR JAIN (Old Name), S/o of BHEWARCHAND JAIN & BHAWARI DEVI, residing at No. 34/1, 30TH CROSS, 7TH BLOCK JAYANAGAR, BANGALORE-560070, changed my name to PRAVEEN KUMAR JAIN (New Name), Vide Affidavit Dt: 17-2-26, sworn before Notary Mohammed Hussain K.

I Surya Venkat Amogh Aryasomayasula S/O, Chandrashekhar Surya Venkat Aryasomayasula R/o No 230, Nvt Symphony Of Orchards, Chambenahalli Village, Karnataka - 562125 Born 2/12/2002 have changed my name to Amogh Surya Venkata Aryasomayajula.

I, V Anuradha, W/o S.K Paramesh, residing at No.24, Sapthagiri Nilaya, 1st A Main road, Dollars Colony, RMV II Stage, Bengaluru-560094, have changed my name to ANURADHA PARAMESH. V, vide affidavit dt: 10.02.2026 before notary A Manjula, R.love

I, Krishna B son of Ramakrishna T residing at Yeshwanthpur Bengaluru, do hereby declare that we have changed our minor son's name from "Laksh K" to "Laksh Ram K" for all the purposes.

personal

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Mahesh koujalgi (Old Name), S/o of Shankar Mahareddeppa Koujalgi residing at No.137, Grand Lavasa villa, phase 2, B K farm, Chandapur-Anekal Road, Byagadadhenahalli, Marsur, Bengaluru-562106 Karnataka, India, changed my name from Mahesh koujalgi to Mahesh Shankar koujalgi vide affidavit dated 18.02.2026, sworn before Notary, Muniswamy.T Henceforth, I shall be known as Mahesh Shankar koujalgi for all purposes.

WE, PRAVEEN KUMAR J. & Smt. ASHWINI B R Resident of #55, 4th Cross Sapthagiri Layout, Mathurayanagar, Jnanabharathi Bangalore - 560056 have changed our minor son's name from JANAV P. to AGASTYA P. vide affidavit dated 16.02.2026 Sworn before notary C Srinivasa, Bangalore

I, Sudeep Kumar Goswami, have changed my name to Sudiip K Goswami vide Affidavit No. IN-KA[illegible] dated 06.02.2026. Henceforth, I shall be known as Sudiip K Goswami for all purposes.

I HEENA PRAVEEN KUMAR JAIN (Old Name), W/o of PRAVEEN KUMAR JAIN, and D/o of BHAWARLAL HUNDIA & BHAGAWATI BEN, residing at No. 34/1, 30TH CROSS, 7TH BLOCK JAYANAGAR, BANGALORE - 560070, changed my name to HEENA JAIN (New Name), Vide Affidavit Dt: 17-2-26, sworn before Notary Mohammed Hussain K.

I Radhika D/o Ezhilpari Ramaswamy 189 Ramya Residency, Indiranagar,B-38, Have Changed my name to Radhika Ezhilpari Affidavit dt: 19-02-2026 by M. Rajendra

I, NIDHI HARI D/o Hari Madhav, R/at No 374, Uber Verdant Apartment, 7th Floor, Carmelaram, Sarjapura, Doddakannalli, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560035, Have Changed My Name From NIDHI HARI To NIDHI HARI M. Vide Affidavit dated 19/02/2026 before Notary Ganesh Gowda M.V.

I, S Gangadharan, S/o Subramanian S, residing at #99, V.V. Annaiah Road, Yelachenahalli, Kanakapura Main Road, Bangalore - 560078, have changed my name to Gangadharan S Pillai w.e.f. 16/02/2026.

PRIME PROPERTY

INVEST WHERE THE CITY IS GROWING

Premium Plotted Development Near Mysore Airport

Located on NH-766 Highway Approach, ensuring seamless connectivity to key city hubs.

MUDA & RERA APPROVED

- 500 m from Toll Plaza
- High-Growth Investment Corridor
- Ready-to-Build Residential Plots
- World-Class Infrastructure & Amenities
- Wide Roads | Green Environment Excellent Planned Layout

Available Sizes:
30 × 40 | 30 × 50 | 40 × 60

Avail Exclusive Inaugural Offer for Limited Plots

Enquire Now. Call:
96069 07153 / 63663 84517

INDEPENDENT LIVING IN A PRIME LOCATION

30×40, 4 BHK Premium Residence at Vijayanagar 4th Stage, Mysore

Thoughtfully designed for modern families seeking privacy, space, and long-term value.

Configuration:
Stilt + 2 Floors (2BHK Each Floor)
Total Built-Up: 32 Squares
Private Lift (4 - Passenger Capacity)

Key Highlights:
- Neo-Modern Elevation with Premium Finishes
- Teak Wood Main Door
- Engineered Wood Internal Doors
- UPVC Windows with Mosquito Mesh
- Jaquar/Equivalent Plumbing Fittings
- S.S/Aluminium Balcony Railings
- Vitrified Flooring & Granite Staircase
- Ample Water Storage with Sump & OHT

Book Your Site Visit Today
Call: **+91 96069 07153**

BUSINESS CONNECT

GET NOTICED

GET NOTICED

India doesn't see fear in AI, India sees future in it: PM

▸ Continued from page 1

At a time when fears have grown about AI, which, while generating impressive benefits in diverse fields, can lead to risks ranging from autonomous weapon systems, machines breaking free of control of developers, and breakthroughs widening the gap between powerful countries and others, the PM struck a positive yet cautious note. He noted the wariness about the consequences which could have not been imagined until very recently, but focused on the enthusiasm with which the youth have approached, what he called, the latest of turning points in history.

"Today, the world is divided into two kinds of people: those who see fear in AI and speak only of that fear, and those who see fortune in AI. I say with responsibility and with pride that India does not see fear in AI. India sees fortune in AI. India sees the future in AI," Modi said.

He acknowledged the task that govts and societies face and said while history has seen many turning points, the transformative change represented by AI is unprecedented in terms of speed and scale.

The PM sought to strike a balance between increasingly desperate cries for regulating AI and those saying that curbs could stifle innovation, thus nipping potential breakthroughs, which hold the key to challenges of Alzheimer's, cancer and climate change. "We must give AI the open sky, but keep the command in our hands. Just like GPS — it suggests the route — but the final decision of direction is ours. The path we choose for AI today will determine the future we create tomorrow," he said.

On Wednesday, senior White House policy adviser on AI, Sriram Krishnan, had said that the US wants to make sure that the world uses the American AI stack.

Modi said India's perspective on AI is reflected in the theme of the summit — Sarvajan Hitaya, Sarvajan Sukhaya — Welfare for all, Happiness for all' —and that is India's benchmark.

Macron: Ready to raise local content in Rafale

Slams Critics Who Questioned Its Performance

Surendra.Singh
@timesofindia.com

Emmanuel Macron

New Delhi: French President Emmanuel Macron said that Rafale fighter jets will boost India's military strength and that he is committed to having more indigenous content in 'made-in-India Rafale', as sought by the Modi govt.

Speaking on the sidelines of the AI-India Summit at the end of his three-day visit, Macron told the French and Indian media, "Rafale improves the strategic relations between us, and it creates more jobs here." On criticism in some western quarters over the performance of the 4.5-gen fighter, especially during Operation Sindoor last year, the President said, "I don't see how people can criticise the aircraft because it (Rafale) makes your country stronger."

Macron said France and India are entering a new era of defence cooperation with plans to jointly produce Rafale fighter jets as well as helicopters. "On Rafale, what we want to do is expand. India confirmed a few days ago its willingness to command a new bunch of Rafales... 114... and to co-produce in India," he said. India's expected order for another 114 Rafales is a "new step forward" in defence ties. On India's demand for increasing indigenous content in the jet's co-production, Macron said, "Very clearly, we are extremely, I would say, committed to having a maximum number of Indian components and manufacturing a maximum number of critical devices in India.... We will have increased cooperation in maintenance and diversification."

Showing his willingness to sell more French submarines to India, Macron cited the tie-up on Rafales to make his case. "I hope we will do it on submarines. We have offered additional capacities," he said. The Indian Navy currently operates six French Scorpene submarines and there are plans to have more – at least three – such submarines from France in the near future.

The President said India's push to co-produce Rafale fighter jets is a "legitimate" ambition that aligns with the "direction of history... Rafale is the key." He underscored the long-term necessity of this partnership, predicting that India's requirement for advanced aviation will only grow in the coming decades. "Looking ahead to 2040 and 2050, I am telling you, India will need combat aviation," Macron said. "We don't have a strategic partnership, we have a global spatial strategic partnership, which is unique for both France and India," he said.

Macron's reaction come just days after the Rajnath Singh-led Defence Acquisition Council gave the initial clearance for acquiring 114 more Rafale jets and the defence minister discussed the jet deal with his French counterpart Catherine Vautrin as part of the India-France annual defence dialogue on Tuesday.

Govts, platforms should make internet a safe place: Macron

▸ Continued from P 1

The French leader struck a bullish note on India being part of AI revolution and benefiting from it. Backing India and Europe's AI aspirations, he said India had proved the world wrong after being told a decade ago that 1.4 billion people could not be brought into the digital economy.

On a ban on social media networks for children under 15 years of age, Macron said France is embarking on the journey with several European countries also committed to it. Australia has become the first country to ban social media for children under 16 and, in India, TDP has pushed for a regulation along similar lines.

"I know, Mr PM, you will join this club. And this is great news that India will join such an approach in order to protect children and teenagers," he said, referring to Modi who was in the audience along with other global leaders. Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had said that India was debating the issue of restricting children's access to social media, but no decision has been taken yet.

"Our platforms, govts and regulators should be working together to make the Internet and social media a safe space," Macron said. In his address, he emphasised France's shared vision with India to ensure access to AI for everyone at a time when it has become a "major field of strategic competition".

Rajnath calls for united seas as 74 nations sail into MILAN

Visakhapatnam: Defence minister Rajnath Singh urged global powers to confront fast-evolving, intertwined maritime risks through cooperation rooted in respect and reciprocity, as India opened its largest-ever multilateral naval exercise Exercise MILAN-2026.

"When our ships sail together, when our sailors train together, and when our commanders deliberate together, we build a shared understanding that transcends geography and politics," he said Thursday. Singh addressed visiting navy chiefs and delegations from nine Asean members at the inaugural ceremony, welcoming a turnout that has expanded from four foreign navies in 1995 to 74 nations this year.

Navies now shoulder a broader burden as global commerce surges and competition sharpens around chokepoints and channels, Singh said. Growing interest in underwater resources, including rare earth minerals, adds pressure. Terrorist networks spanning borders further complicate security. Climate change is intensifying disasters, pushing humanitarian and relief missions to the fore. "No single navy, however capable, can address these challenges alone," Singh said.

He invited Asean countries to tap into India's expanding defence-industrial base, saying Aatmanirbhar Bharat push has transformed India into a "builder's navy". TNN

TN in SC on freebies: Govt absorbing ₹50k cr revenue-spending gap

▸ Continued from page 1

The central law required the companies to not incur losses by selling power at rates below it is produced.

Though the bench issued notice to the Centre and sought its response on the matter, it was unrelenting in its criticism of the freebie culture, especially free power and DBT schemes, during the 25-minute hearing.

CJI Kant said if states want to give up the profit element in electricity distribution, then it is their choice. "If it is given free, then the affluent and poor will leave their machines, water pumps and lights on 24X7 as they do not have to pay for it. There will be no discipline in using a precious commodity," he said.

Appearing for the TN corporation, senior advocate Gopal Subramanium said, "The revenue-expenditure gap in TN is touching about Rs 50,000 crore which the govt is absorbing. While implementing the new rule, which the central govt has inserted, tariffs must be passed on to the consumers. That is why this petition."

The CJI said, "The universal principle is that one must pay for facilities and amenities. A state can decide to give up profits but charge consumers only the cost of power production."

"At whose cost are these freebies being given? From where would you (states) divert the money to sustain this largesse? From the taxpayers money, isn't it? Are the taxpayers wrong in expecting hospitals, schools, roads and other infrastructure," the CJI asked.

"We will be hampering development of the country, if we keep on distributing largesse. There must be long-term planning. How long will this continue? Let the TN govt file an affidavit, from where they are diverting the money to provide free power," the bench said.

The CJI said, "The states' endeavour should be to open vistas and avenues for employment with respectable wages for people so that they can earn livelihood with dignity and self-respect."

CREDAI

DS MAX SKY SAMPADHA

2 & 3-BHK HOMES ▲ G + 22 FLOORS ▼

HOSUR ROAD - 10 MINS. ELECTRONIC CITY

2-BHK	3-BHK
₹61 LAKHS*	₹89 LAKHS*

ONWARDS

Not just location. Not just price.
Our past projects have witnessed up to

2X Growth in 3 Years

This could be your next smart move..

2, 3 & 4-BHK APARTMENTS FOR SALE IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS

WHITEFIELD 10 MINS. HOPEFARM METRO ₹ 77.91 L - 1.32 Cr* 8880 461 461	SILKBOARD NEAR SINGASANDRA METRO STN. ₹ 87.62 L - 1.36 Cr* 8880 013 310	AIRPORT ROAD NEAR PRESTIGE TECH IT PARK ₹ 87.89 L - 1.21 Cr* 8880 465 465	MYSORE ROAD NEAR CHALLAGHATTA METRO STN. ₹ 67.28 - 95.28 Lakhs* 8880 461 461	JIGANI 5 MINS. APC CIRCLE ₹ 58.45 - 92.06 Lakhs* 8880 003 003	BANASHANKARI OPP. NPS SCHOOL (3 & 4-BHK) ₹ 1.45 - 2.17 Cr* 8880 461 461
YELAHANKA 5 MINS. RAJANUKUNTE ₹ 54.85 - 97.21 Lakhs* 8880 465 465	BANNERGHATTA RD. NEAR KOPPA GATE ₹ 62.42 - 85.23 Lakhs* 8880 013 310	SARJAPURA SARJAPUR - ATTIBELE ROAD ₹ 63.60 - 83.25 Lakhs* 8880 003 003	HOSA ROAD METRO NEAR ELECTRONIC CITY ₹ 67.92 L - 1.34 Cr* 8880 013 310	WHITEFIELD SOUKYA ROAD ₹ 70.65 L - 1.06 Cr* 8880 461 461	Visit our website or talk to our advisors for the complete portfolio

TIMES ascent
Catapult your career

NPCC

नेशनल प्रोजेक्ट्स कंस्ट्रक्शन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड
NATIONAL PROJECTS CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION LIMITED
A GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ENTERPRISE
Advt.No.NPCC/Regular/Finance/HR/Dec./2026

NPCC Limited, a Mini Ratna Category-I, Primer of Schedule 'B' CPSU, is a subsidiary of WAPCOS Limited. The Company is engaged in Engineering Construction, Planning, Operation and Project Management Consultancy. The Company invites applications for the following posts on regular basis:

Name of Post	No. of Tentative Vacancies	Pay Scale (₹)
Chief General Manager (Finance)	1	90000 - 240000 (IDA)
Manager (Finance)	4	50000 - 160000 (IDA)
Manager (HR)	4	50000 - 160000 (IDA)
Dy. Manager (Internal)	11	40000 - 140000 (IDA)

For details, please visit our Website – www.npcc.gov.in

General Manager (HR)
NPCC Limited

NATIONAL BANK FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
NABARD
Plot No. C-24, G Block, Bandra -Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai 400051

Recruitment of Chief Financial Advisor on Contract - 2025- 26

NABARD, an all India Apex Development Financial Institution, wholly owned by Government of India, invites ONLY online applications from Indian citizens having necessary qualification and experience for recruitment of Chief Financial Advisor on contract basis.

The Online Application Registration & Payment of Online Application Fees / Intimation Charges would be available from 21.02.2026 to 10.03.2026 on NABARD website.

For details related to Educational Qualification, Experience, Job Profile, Age, Application Fee, Selection Procedure, Remuneration, Service Conditions, etc. please refer the detailed advertised to be published on our website www.nabard.org on 21.02.2026

Place: Mumbai — Chief General Manager
Date: 19 February 2026 — Human Resources Management Department

www.nabard.org — Taking Rural India >>Forward

NMDC Limited
(A Government of India Enterprise)

Employment Notification No: 02/2026 — Dated: 18.02.2026

NMDC Limited, a Navaratna Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Steel, Government of India and a multi locational, multi product and consistently profit-making Mining & Mineral Exploration Organization with large turnover. NMDC is in the process of massive expansion and diversification both in India and abroad.

NMDC is now inviting applications from eligible & willing candidates with relevant experience to apply/register for the following posts at its Tokisud North Coal Mine, Hazaribagh District, Jharkhand State:

Sl.No.	Post	Grade	No. of Posts
1	AGM (Mining)	M-7	1
2	Manager (Mechanical)	M-5	1
3	Manager (Mining) (Safety Officer)	M-5	1
4	Manager (Mining) (Blasting Officer)	M-5	1
5	Manager (Mining) (Production Manager)	M-5	1
6	Jr. Manager (Survey)	M-2	1
	TOTAL		6

For detailed notification regarding posts, grade, age, qualification, experience, scale of pay, reservation and other conditions etc, interested candidates may visit "Careers" page on NMDC website. https://www.nmdc.co.in/careers

AGM (HR)

RAMAIAH INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT FOUNDATION

(A proposed Greenfield STEM Deemed to be University under section 3 of UGC Act, 1956 from the Ramaiah Group of Education, Bengaluru)

Faculty Recruitment

Professor, Associate Professor & Assistant Professor

Specialization

A. Engineering Disciplines:
- Computer Science and Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- Aerospace Engineering
- Electronics Engineering (VLSI Design and Technology)

B. Natural Science
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Mathematics

C. Management

Qualifications & Experience (As per UGC/AICTE)

Professor : Qualifications: • Ph.D. in relevant or allied discipline. • Must satisfy Assistant Professor qualification criteria.

Experience: • Minimum 10 years, including 3 years at Associate Professor level OR Minimum 12 years combined experience as Assistant + Associate Professor

Additional Requirements (any one): • 4 WoS publications at Associate Professor level AND 2 Ph.D. scholars guided. OR 6 publications / patents at Associate Professor or equivalent level. OR 10 publications / patents at Assistant/Associate Professor or equivalent R&D/Industry level.

Associate Professor : Qualifications: • Ph.D. in relevant or allied discipline. • Must satisfy Assistant Professor qualification criteria.

Experience: • Minimum 8 years in teaching/research/industry.

Additional Requirements: • Minimum 6 publications in Web of Science journals or granted patents • With at least 2 in the last 3 years.

Assistant Professor: Qualifications:

A. For Engineering Desciplines: • B.E./B.Tech. and M.E./M.Tech./M.S. or Integrated M.Tech. OR B.E./B.Tech. with Ph.D., as applicable. • First Class (UG or PG) in the relevant discipline as per AICTE/UGC norms.

B. Natural Science Desciplines: • Relevant UG + PG + Ph.D., as applicable. Or UG + PG with NET/SLET & • First Class (UG or PG) in the relevant discipline as per AICTE/UGC norms.

C. Management Desciplines: • Relevant UG + PG + Ph.D., as applicable. Or UG + PG + 3 years of relevant industry or Academic experience & • First Class (UG or PG) in the relevant discipline as per AICTE/UGC norms.

Scale of Pay: As per RISMF norms

Application should include: • A detailed CV. • Cover letter outlining teaching and research interests. • Research proposal (max 2000 words). • Copies of qualifications, experience certificates, and key publications. • Contact details of at least three referees.

Please Email your CV and other relevant documents to registrar@rism.org.in

Last date to Apply : within 10 days of this advertisement.

www.rism.org.in

ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY, ALIGARH

An Institution of National Importance listed in the Schedule VII of the Constitution of India

Advertisement No.01/2026(T) Dated 17.02.2026

Online Applications, to be filled up at the Careers Portal of the University https://careers.amuonline.ac.in, are invited from Indian Nationals (including Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Cardholders under Section 7A of the Citizenship Act, 1955) for recruitment to various Teaching Posts. Last date for receipt of Online Application Forms is 16.03.2026 up-to 11:59 P.M. and the last date for submission of the Hard Copies of the Online filled Application Forms is 02.04.2026 up-to 05:00 P.M. The Hard Copies will not be received after 02.04.2026 (05:00 P.M.). The University will not be responsible for the Postal delay.

Detailed Instructions for filling up the employment application forms have been given on Pages 08 to 10 of the above Advertisement.

REGISTRAR

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

(Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)
CIN : U40109PB2010SGC033813 Website : www.pspcl.in
(Office :- Engineer-in-Chief/ P&M, PSPCL, Ludhiana.)

Tender Enquiry no. 09/CE/P&M/2025-26

EIC/P&M, PSPCL, Ludhiana invites e-Tender for Manufacture, testing, supply and delivery of Single-Phase Relay Test Sets. For detailed NIT & Tender specifications please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 20.02.2026 (11:00 hrs) onwards.

Note : Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

C 206/26, DPR/PB. : 1076/12/2026 [illegible]

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001
Corporate Identity No. U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website : www.pspcl.in (Contact number 9646118721)

Tender Enquiry No. CW-340/PO-W **Dated 18.02.2026**

Chief Engineer/Stores & Workshops Organization, Sarabha Nagar, PSPCL, Ludhiana, invites E-tender of Repair of 3-phase, 50 cycles, outdoor type, oil immersed, naturally cooled, Stack core type construction, CWP Aluminium Wound Distribution Transformers (Type Conventional) of capacity 63 KVA with voltage ratio 11/0.433 KV conforming to ISS: 2026 (with latest amendments, if any) and 1180 part-1 (2014) complete with a first filling of oil conforming to ISS: 335/1993 (with latest amendments, if any)

Quantity = 800 Nos.

For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 18.02.2026 from 04.00 P.M. onwards.

NOTE :- Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

C 254/26, DPR/PB. 1075/12/2026 [illegible]

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, DAVANAGERE DIVISION, DAVANAGERE.

No.EE.PWD/Dvg/AE-3/IFT-45/2025-26 Dated:- 19.02.2026

SHOR TERM E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Ref : This office tender notification No. IFT-4x/2025-26 dated : 18.02.2026

The works under Head of Account 3054-04-337-1-10-200 MDR Maintenance 1 work Rs. 200.00 lakhs pertaining to Honnali sub division under the Jurisdiction of PWD, Davanagere division has been called for the tenders from registered Contractors in KPWD for the above works through KPP Portal as per standard tender documents rules.

Tender dates are as mentioned below:

Last Date & time for receipt of tenders 27.02.2026 Time: 16.00

Date & time for opening of Technical Bid 02.03.2026 Time: 16.30

Further details can be obtained from this office in office hours.

D PR/CTA/KSMCA/ 754/2025-26

Sd/- Executive Engineer
PWD, Davanagere.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

NOTICE

Request For Proposal (RFP) for engagement of an agency for conducting Skill Gap Assessment Study of Sikkim under Sikkim INSPIRES Program

The Skill Development Department (SDD), Government of Sikkim, invites proposals from eligible agencies for conducting a Skill Gap Assessment Study (SGAS) across all six districts of Sikkim under the Sikkim INSPIRES Program. The Request for Proposal (RFP) is open to eligible agencies registered within or outside the State of Sikkim that are interested in partnering with the Department for implementation of the study under this Program.

Key Details :
- Last Date for Pre-Bid Queries Submission : [illegible]
- Last Date for Proposal Submission : [illegible]
- Tender Fee : 10,000/- (Non-refundable Demand Draft)
- Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) : 4,00,000/- (Fixed Deposit Receipt)
- RFP Document : Available at https://sdd.sikkim.gov.in/

Proposals must be submitted in a sealed envelope to the address specified in the RFP on or before the deadline indicated therein. Any proposal received after the prescribed date and time will be rejected and will not be considered for evaluation.

(Sandeep Bhalla) SCS, Special Secretary-cum-Nodal Officer
Skill Development Department, Govt. of Sikkim,
Room No. 201, Shram Bhawan, Sokeythang, Gangtok - 737103
email : sdd.sikkiminspires@gmail.com

[illegible]

STATE BANK OF INDIA

PREMISES & ESTATE DEPARTMENT

2nd Floor, Local Head Office, Sbi Tower, Block – 53a, Gift City, Gandhinagar, Gujarat-382355, Ph: (079) 29000140, E-mail: agmpe.lhoguj@sbi.co.in

CORRIGENDUM

NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR PREQUALIFICATION AND SELECTION OF CONTRACTORS / FIRMS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF TWO MULTI STORIED RESIDENTIAL BUILDING HAVING 2.42 LAKHS SQ. FT. BUILT-UP AREA AT PLOT NO 41 A & B, GIFT CITY, GANDHINAGAR, GUJARAT.

Last date for submission of application on prescribed format for Pre-qualification and Selection of Contractors for the proposed construction of captioned project with estimated cost of Rs.253.33 crores + GST (Tender ID – SBI/GNR/25-26/03) extended up to 05.03.2026 up to 5:00 PM. Pre-qualification details, Technical bid, Price bid and annexures can be downloaded from Bank's website www.sbi.co.in > SBI in the News > Procurement News. The duly filled-in tender documents should reach to AGM(P&E) at above-mentioned address on or before 05/03/2026 up to 5.00 PM. Any updates/Corrigendum/addendum etc., if any, against this NIT will be published online on said website only.

Date: 20/02/2026

Sd/-
Assistant General Manager (P&E)

TNPL TAMIL NADU NEWSPRINT AND PAPERS LIMITED

Kagithapuram - 639 136, Karur Dist. Tamil Nadu.
Kagitha Nagar, Mondipatti - 621 306, Trichy Dist, Tamil Nadu.

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Tender No.	Nature of work	Date of publishing Tender document in TNPL/NIC website	Due date
252623 004224	Procurement of AKD for Liquid Packaging Grade (A.L.I) for Board Machine (CCK) of TNPL Unit II.	20.02.2026	06.03.2026
252623 004262	Bleached Softwood Kraft Pulp (BSKP), Rain Index B.E for Unit-II	20.02.2026	02.03.2026
252623 004266	Bleached Softwood Kraft Pulp (BSKP) for Unit-II	20.02.2026	03.03.2026
252623 004268	Bleached Softwood Kraft Pulp (BSKP) FSC Mix for Unit-II	20.02.2026	02.03.2026
252623 004267	BCTMP Softwood 70 - High Yield for Unit-I	20.02.2026	03.03.2026
252623 004268	BCTMP Softwood 70 - High Yield Pulp for Unit-II	27.02.2026	05.03.2026
252623 004269	BCTMP Softwood 70 - Bleached Chemi Thermo Mechanical Pulp Softwood 70 Brightness FSC Mix for Unit-II	27.02.2026	10.03.2026
252623 004270	BCTMP Hardwood 78 - High Yield Pulp for Unit II	20.02.2026	05.03.2026
252623 004271	BCTMP Hardwood 88 - High Yield Pulp (Low Tender) for Unit-II	20.02.2026	05.03.2026

Corrigendum if any will be issued in TNPL Website and NIC Portal only. For further details, please visit websites : www.tnpl.com / https://tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app

DIPR/1224/Tender/2026 TNPL - Maker of bagasse based eco-friendly Paper

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
BALLARI MEDICAL COLLEGE AND RESEARCH CENTRE, BALLARI.

Reg.No:285/1995-96 Recognized by Medical Council of India, New Delhi vide Sec.MCI-37(3)/79-Med/1902.1006.16-04-1975 & Under No.MCI-37(1)(Recog.-18)/UG/2017-Med./109428 Dt: 06.05.2019
DIRECTOR: 8147790529 PRINCIPAL: 8147790517
CAO: 8147790526 PA : 8147790538,
e-mail: bmcdirectorbmcrcballari@gmail.com, website : https://bmcrcballari.karnataka.gov.in [illegible]

No. BMCRC/SUP/TEND/SCB/10/2025-26/490

DATE:16.02.2026

e-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Tenders invited from the eligible Bidders for Supply of Syringes, Chemotherapy Drugs and Blood Bank Reagents Medical College Hospital, BMCRC, Ballari on Rate Contract for a period of One year under Two bid system through e procurement portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in of Government of Karnataka as per the KTPP Act.1999-2000. The interested Bidders are informed to submit the proposal in prescribed format in above said e-portal on or before 02.03.2026 @5.00PM. The total approximate cost of tender is Rs.53.35Lakhs Further details may be obtained in the above said website and www.bmcrcballari.karnataka.gov.in.

Sd/- Dean & Director, BMCRC, Ballari

DIPR/Ballari/1024/KSMCA/2025-26

KARNATAKA NEERAVARI NIGAMA LIMITED

(A Government of Karnataka Enterprises)

Office of the **Executive Engineer, KNNL, SLIS, Division No-2, Huvinahadagali, Vijayanagara(Dist)**

Ph.No.08399-200301 e-mail: eeslid2hdl@gmail.com

TENDER NOTIFICATION (ONLY THROUGH "e-Procurement" SYSTEM)

Reference: 1.This office Tender Notification No: 1755/2025-26 Dated: 11.02.2026

Tenders in Electronic mode are invited on behalf of the Managing Director, KNNL, Bengaluru bythe Executive Engineer, KNNL, SLIS Division No.2, Huvinahadagali for the work of "**Repairs to Canals of Right Side of Singatalura Lift Irrigation Scheme for the Year 2025-26**"coming under SLIS Project from the eligible Tenderers who are fulfilled the terms and conditionsmentioned as in Tender Notification cited at reference (1) above. The tenders having Work Indent No.**KNNL/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT4042** in KPP-Portal and The amount put to tender this work is **Rs.423.46** Lakh(Excluding GST) and EMD amount is Rs.6.35 Lakh.

Therefore, The bidders can access the tender in https://kppp.karnataka.gov.inwebsite from 19.02.2026 and the last date of submission for the tender is 02.03.2026 and date of opening of technical Bid 03.03.2026. A Pre-bid meeting held on 21.02.2026 at 11.00 AM in office of the Office of the Executive Engineer, KNNL, SLIS Division No.2, Huvinahadagali.

Further bidders are hereby by instructed to contact or visit the below mentioned office in working hours regarding Terms and Conditions of the tender and for furthermore information please contact e-procurement Helpdesk Phone Numbers:+91-80-46010000, +91-80-68948777.Conditional tenders are liable to be rejected. The officer competent to accept the tender shall have the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Sd/-Executive Engineer, KNNL, SLIS Division No-2, Huvinahadagali, Vijayanagara(Dist)

DIPR/Vijayanagar/2124-25/KSMCA/RO No/534

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001
Corporate Identity No. U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website : www.pspcl.in (Contact number 9646118721)

Tender Enquiry No. CW-341/PO-W **Dated 18.02.2026**

Chief Engineer/Stores & Workshops Organization, Sarabha Nagar, PSPCL, Ludhiana, invites E-tender of Repair of 3-phase, 50 cycles, outdoor type, oil immersed, naturally cooled, Stack core type construction, CWP Aluminium Wound Distribution Transformers (Type Conventional) of capacity 100 KVA with voltage ratio 11/0.433 KV conforming to ISS: 2026 (with latest amendments, if any) and 1180 part-1 (2014) complete with a first filling of oil conforming to ISS: 335/1993 (with latest amendments, if any)

Quantity = 800 Nos.

For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 18.02.2026 from 4.00 P.M. onwards.

NOTE :- Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

C 255/26, DPR/PB. 1076/12/2026 [illegible]

RAICHUR POWER CORPORATION LIMITED

(A joint venture company of KPCL, BHEL & IFCIL)
(YERMARUS THERMAL POWER STATION)
CIN : U40101KA2009PLC049582

ABSTRACT BID NOTIFICATION

(Through KPP Portal only)

RPCL, e-tender is published in Karnataka Govt. e-portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** under **"SERVICES"** category as per YTPS requirements.

KPCL/2025-26/PS/WORK_INDENT3955, Dated: 12.02.2026, Supply, Erection, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of RF Admittance Type ESP Level Switches with PLC-SCADA Based Monitoring and Alarm System for Ash Handling Plant. **Last date and time for receipt of tenders : 02.03.2026 at 15:00 hrs.**

Any further details can be had from the **Executive Engineer** (I&C)-2, YTPS, RPCL, Yermarus-584134, Raichur Dist., **Tele/Fax: 08532-286003, Mobile: +91 9900111049, www.kpcl.karnataka.gov.in**

POWER COMPANY OF KARNATAKA LIMITED

(Government of Karnataka undertaking) (CIN: U40101KA2007SGC043640)
4th Floor, INDHANA BHAVANA, Race Course Road Bengaluru - 560009.

No. PCKL/TECH/DDPS/1/2026/6974 Date: 19.02.2026

e-TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Through KPPP mode only)

PCKL invites tender for Consultancy services through KPP portal.

Name of the work	EMD Amount in Rs.
Consultancy services to carry out a comprehensive "year on year Rolling Plan Study of Resource Adequacy Plan (Generation) for Karnataka" for 5 consecutive years. **Tender No. PCKL/2025-26/SE0006**	25,000/-

Further details of the tender can be obtained from **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** or **https://www.pckl.karnataka.gov.in from 21.02.2026 onwards** and last date for submission of bid in KPP portal **on or before 23.03.2026, 17.00 Hrs.** Contact No. 8277895837.

Note: Any changes, addendum, clarification and corrigendum will be notified in e-Procurement only.

Sd/-
Additional Director (Projects)
PCKL, Bengaluru

KARNATAKA STATE MINERALS CORPORATION LIMITED

(Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
Regd. Office : 5th Floor, TTMC A Block, BMTC Building, Shanthinagar, K.H. Road, Bangalore - 560027. Ph : 080 -22278813 /14/15/16 ,
Fax : 080-22213172 Website: www.ksmc.karnataka.gov.in

No. KSMCL/Civil/BGQ/881/2025-26 **Date: 18.02.2026**

SHORT TERM e-TENDER INVITATION Call - 2

KSMCL invites 2nd time short term e-Tender interested agencies / contractors Regarding consultancy services for detail survey, Investigation & preparation of Architectural & Engineering consultancy services, Detailed Project Report for the construction of Office Building of Karnataka State Minerals Corporation Limited at Mysore Road, Bytarayanapura, Bengaluru.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

1.	**Downloading of Tender document from e-portal**	From 19.02.2026
2.	**Last date for submission of Tender through e-portal**	06.03.2026 Up to 5.00 PM
3.	**Date of opening of Technical Bid**	09.03.2026 At 11.00 AM
4.	**Earnest Money Deposit**	Rs. 25,000/- (Rs. Twenty Five thousand Only)

Tender document may be downloaded from e-procurement, GOK platform website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** Department: MML. Contact for any support e-procurement Call helpdesk: 080-46010000/68948777.

Sd/-
GENERAL MANAGER (A&V)

DIPR/CP/5736/NB/2025-26

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL), ODISHA
NIRMAN SOUDHA, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR

34001/94/2526

E-mail ID: cebuildings_orissa@yahoo.co.in, cebuildings@rediffmail.com, Tel. (0674)-2391532

INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

File No-B-III-Sports-12/2025 Lr. No.- 5848 Bhubaneswar, the 18th Feb., 2026

Invitation for Bids

Bid Identification No. CE-Bldg-I-03/2025-26

1. The Chief Engineer, Buildings-I, Odisha, Bhubaneswar, on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in double cover system in ONLINE MODE only, for the works, (1) **"Construction of Block Level Stadium with Indoor Hall in Raruan Block under Mayurbhanj District" & (2) "Construction of Block Level Stadium with Indoor Hall in Karanjia Block under Mayurbhanj District"** as detailed below.
2. Nature of work : **Building Works**
3. No. of work : **02 Nos.**
4. Bid Cost : **Rs. 10,000/-**
5. Class of Contractor : **'A' / Special**
6. Availability of Bid Documents in the website : **From dt. 16.03.2026 to 17.00 Hours of dt. 31.03.2026.**
7. Date of Opening of Bid : **Dt. 02.04.2026 at 11:30 AM.**
8. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: https://tendersodisha.gov.in. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.

Sd/- Chief Engineer, Buildings-I, Odisha

OIPR-34001/34/11/1/25-26/0026

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, CAPITAL HOSPITAL, BHUBANESWAR

100017/12026

ଜାପିଟାଲ ହସ୍ପିଟାଲ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶକଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ

Unit - VI, Ganga Nagar, Udyan Marg, Bhubaneswar-751001, Khordha
Email: substorechb@gmail.com/director.chb@gmail.com; Ph-0674-2391983/85/75
No. 1638 /Sub-store/ /2026 Date 19th Feb 2026

TENDER CALL NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited from Manufacturers / Importers / Wholesalers / Distributors for **"Supply of Cathlab Consumables"** for the year 2026-2027 through courier service / speed post only. For details, please visit our website: www.capitalhospital.nic.in **[WWW.CAPITALHOSPITAL[dot]NIC[dot]IN]**. The details of Last date & time of receipt of tender, pre-bid meeting, date & time of opening of tender, venue etc. are mentioned in the bid documents. The undersigned reserves the right to reject or cancel any or all the tender without any reason thereof.

Sd/-
Director,
Capital Hospital, Bhubaneswar

OIPR-10001/11/0079/1/25-26/0006

GMR KAMALANGA ENERGY LIMITED

[illegible]

CORRIGENDUM TO EOI

dated 16th February 2026

a. Para 1 to be read as below: GMR Kamalanga Energy Limited is Seeking Expression of Interest for Prequalification of Applicants for Balance of Plant Packages for 1x350 MW Extension Project of Jalud MW Kamalanga TPP at Dhenkanal District, Odisha, India.

b. Communication Address has been changed as mentioned in the header.

Please visit tender section at www.gmrpui.com/energy for further details.

[illegible]

कार्यालय मुख्य अभियन्ता, नगर निगम, बरेली

पत्रांक 393/मु०अभि०/निवि०/2025-26 दिनांक 18.02.2026

अल्पकालीन पुनः ई-निविदा आमन्त्रण सूचना

नगर निगम, बरेली द्वारा नगर निगम, बरेली के कर्मचारियों हेतु रामपुर गार्डन परिसर, बरेली (3090) में 2 बीएचके एवं 3 बीएचके आवासीय भवनों का डिजाइन, इंजीनियरिंग, सामग्री की आपूर्ति, निर्माण, परीक्षण, कमीशनिंग एवं हैंडओवर कार्य EPC (Engineering, Procurement & Construction) (टर्नकी) आधार पर कराये जाने हेतु योग्य, अनुभवी एवं पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों / फर्मों से द्वि-बिड पद्धति (तकनीकी एवं वित्तीय) के माध्यम से निम्न प्रकार से ई-निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदा खोले जाने की तिथि में यदि अवकाश होता है तो निविदायें अगले कार्य दिवस में खोली जायेंगी।

अवस्थापना निधि के अन्तर्गत प्रथम ई-निविदा आमंत्रित हेतु (क्रमांक सं0-01)	
ई-निविदा डाउनलोड प्रारम्भ की तिथि/समय	20-02-2026 (11:00 AM)
ई-निविदा अपलोड की प्रारम्भ तिथि/समय	20-02-2026 (10:00 PM)
ई-निविदा अपलोड की अन्तिम तिथि/समय	26-02-2026 (05:00 PM)
ई-निविदा खोली जाने की तिथि/समय	27-02-2026- (12:00 PM)
फाइनेंशियल ई-निविदा खोली जाने हेतु	After Technical Evulation

कार्यों का विवरण, नियम व शर्तें नगर निगम बरेली के वेबसाइट www.nagarnigambareilly.com पर ई-निविदा लिंक एवं ई-पोर्टल http://etender.up.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है। किसी परिवर्तन, संशोधन व अतिरिक्त सूचनाओं के लिये उक्त वेबसाइट पर देखी जा सकती है।

मुख्य अभियन्ता
नगर निगम, बरेली

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ನಗರ ನೀರು ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮತ್ತು ಒಳಚರಂಡಿ ಮಂಡಳಿ, ವಿಭಾಗ, ರಾಯಚೂರು

[illegible] ರಾಯಚೂರು- 584101.
ಇ-ಮೇಲ್- eekwbraichur@gmail.com

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ : [illegible]/2025-26/1448 ದಿನಾಂಕ:16.02.2026

ಪ್ರಥಮ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅಧಿಸೂಚನೆ (3ನೇ-ಕರೆ)

[illegible] (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in) [illegible]

[illegible]

1) [illegible] ಸಂ.:KUWSDB/2025-26/WS/WORK INDENT475/CALL-3 2) [illegible] 70,56,337-00. 3) [illegible]: 1,41,000-00, 4) [illegible]: 12 [illegible]

[illegible] 18-02-2026 [illegible] 04-03-2026 [illegible] 06-03-2026 [illegible]

[illegible] 08532 200051

ಸಹಿ/- [illegible]

DIPR/RCB/7-4/KSMCA/717/2025-26 [illegible], ರಾಯಚೂರು.

HAFFKINE BIO-PHARMACEUTICAL CORPORATION LTD.

(Govt. of Maharashtra Undertaking)
Acharya Donde Marg, Parel, Mumbai - 400 012, Maharashtra, India
Phone No.022-24147564/24129320-22, Email:- mm@vaccinehaffkine.com

GLOBAL EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Haffkine Bio-Pharmaceuticals Corporation Ltd. (HBPCL) a Government of Maharashtra Undertaking, WHO accredited invites Global Expression of Interest (EOI) from reputed Vaccine manufacturers / pharmaceutical companies / biotech firms for **Joint Venture / Strategic Partnership** of its DPT (Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus) Vaccine Seed Strain / Master Seed on Royalty Basis. Royalty shall be payable on sales/production of DPT, DT, TT, Quadrivalent, Pentavalent, Hexavalent (Drug Substance & Drug Formulation) etc. manufactured by using HBPCL seed strain.

Detailed EOI document containing eligibility criteria, terms & conditions, submission guidelines and schedule is available on Maharashtra e-Tender Portal: www.mahatenders.gov.in and on the official website www.vaccinehaffkine.com (Tender/Download Section)

Interested and eligible vaccine manufacturer shall submit their proposals online / offline within the time schedule mentioned in the detailed EOI document. HBPCL reserves the rights to accept or reject any or all EOI's without assigning any reason thereof.

Material Manager,
Haffkine Bio Pharmaceutical Corporation Ltd.
Acharya Donde Marg, Parel, Mumbai - 4000012
Email -mm@vaccinehaffkine.com & md@vaccinehaffkine.com
Bid submission start Date:- 18/02/2026 from 9:00 am office hr.
End Date:- 04/03/2026 upto 5:30 pm

Managing Director
Haffkine Bio-Pharmaceutical Corporation Ltd

DGIPR/2025-2026/6001

भारतीय उष्णदेशीय मौसम विज्ञान संस्थान
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TROPICAL METEOROLOGY

(पृथ्वी विज्ञान मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार का एक स्वायत्त संस्थान)
(An autonomous Institute under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Govt. of India)
पाषाण, पुणे - 411 008 / PASHAN, PUNE-411 008

निविदा सूचना / TENDER NOTICE

निदेशक, आइआइटीएम निम्नलिखित की आपूर्ति और स्थापना हेतु निर्माताओं/आपूर्तिकर्ताओं एवं उनके मान्यता प्राप्त विक्रय एजेंटों से निविदाएं आमंत्रित करते हैं:

Director, IITM invites tenders from Manufacturers / Suppliers and their accredited selling agents for the purchase of following:

क्रम सं. Sr. No.	निविदा सं. Tender No.	विवरण / Description
01.	पीएस/125/32/2025 PS/125/32/2025	विस्तारित क्षमताओं के साथ एरोसोल लिडार की आपूर्ति, स्थापना और कमीशनिंग मात्रा 02 सेट्स। Supply, Installation & Commissioning of Aerosol Lidar with Extended Capabilities Qty. 02 sets

संस्थान को किसी निविदा या सभी निविदाओं को बिना कारण बताए निरस्त करने का अधिकार है। विस्तृत विवरण एवं बोलियों के प्रस्तुतीकरण हेतु कृपया वेबसाइट https://moes.ewizard.in देखें। संभावित बोलीदाताओं की जानकारी के लिए निविदा विवरण भी इस संस्थान की वेबसाइट http://www.tropmet.res.in एवं सरकारी सेंट्रल प्रोक्योरमेंट पोर्टल (सीपीपी) http://www.eprocure.gov.in पर भी उपलब्ध है।

The Institute reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof. For details and submission of bids please visit website https://moes.ewizard.in. For the information of the prospective bidders, the tender details are also available on this Institute's Website: http://www.tropmet.res.in and Government's Central Procurement Portal (CPP) http://www.eprocure.gov.in.

Sd/-
प्रशासनिक अधिकारी (पीएसयू), कृते निदेशक
Administrative Officer (PSU), for Director
ईमेल/Email :psu.itm@tropmet.res.in

KARNATAKA STATE MINERALS CORPORATION LIMITED

(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
Regd. Office : TTMC 'A' Block 5th Floor, BMTC Building, KH Road, Shanthinagar, Bengaluru-560027.
Phone: 080-22278813/14/15/16, Fax : 080-22213172
Website: https://ksmc.karnataka.gov.in

No.150/KSMCL/MECH/BGK&BKW/B.H.Loader/2025-26/3155 Date: 19.02.2026

e-TENDER INVITATION

KSMCL invites E-tender for Purchase of Backhoe Loader (min 70 HP) 02 No's to Neeralakeri Dolomite Mines Bagalakote Dist., and Bageshpura Mines Hassan Dist. Karnataka

CALENDER OF EVENTS

Commencement to Download from website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in	19.02.2026
Last date for receiving the queries through e-procurement portal	21.02.2026 up to 5:00 pm
Last date and Time for uploading e-tender in E-Procurement platform on or before	05.03.2026 up to 5:00 pm
The Technical bid will be opened online by the Authorized officers on	07.03.2026 At 11:00 am
Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Rs.1,72,000/-.

Tender documents may be downloaded from e-procurement GOK Platform website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in Contact for any support in uploading & registration, E-procurement Helpdesk: 080-46010000/68948777.

Sd/-
General Manager (A&V)

DIPR/CP/5748/NB/KA/2025-26

Ambani had no plans to leave country, says counsel

▸ Continued from page 1

On Feb 4, retired IAS officer EAS Sarma, through counsel Prashant Bhushan, told a bench led by CJI Surya Kant that given the spread and size of the alleged fraud involving ADAG companies, Ambani, who is the principal accused, may leave the country like many others.

Ambani's counsel Mukul Rohatgi denied that his client had such plans, while pointing to the many 'lookout circulars' secured by probe agencies to prevent him from leaving India.

Following through Rohatgi's assurance, the ADAG chief said in the affidavit, "It is further undertaken that in the event any requirement of foreign travel arises, I shall seek prior leave and permission of SC before undertaking any such travel." He also said he has been fully cooperating with central agencies CBI and ED in their investigation.

He said he has been summoned to appear before ED on Feb 26. "I undertake to appear and join the investigation on the said date. I further undertake to fully cooperate with authorities, while ensuring procedural clarity," said the 66-year-old industrialist.

1st time after Manipur violence, CM gets 2 warring groups on 1 platform

Trust-Building Effort Sees Cash Relief On Offer

Donald Sairem & MK Henry | TNN

Imphal/Churachandpur: A fractured state tried to talk to itself. For the first time since ethnic violence tore Manipur apart in May 2023, chief minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh addressed on Thursday displaced Meitei and Kuki-Zo families together — on a shared platform, if only virtually — pairing cash relief with an appeal to rebuild trust.

The outreach, anchored at a relief camp in Langol of Imphal West district, connected displaced Meitei families in the valley with Kuki-Zo inmates of camps in Churachandpur and Kangpokpi via video link. Direct benefit transfers were credited during the meet. Each displaced person received Rs 2,430 for essentials. Families whose homes were burnt are being paid Rs 1 lakh in instalments, officials said. More than 260 people have been killed and over 60,000 displaced since clashes erupted between Meitei and Kuki communities in 2023. Since then, movement has been sharply curtailed — valley residents rarely enter Kuki-majority hills, and Kukis seldom travel into Imphal.

CM Yumnam Khemchand Singh interacts with children in Imphal

Singh said resettlement had begun in peripheral areas, but restoring homes in sensitive zones remained difficult. "Resettling IDPs (internally displaced persons) to their original places is a priority, though challenges remain. While tensions have eased, mistrust continues," he said, urging social groups and families to help bridge the divide.

It was a modest step — cheques and promises — but the first time the state tried to stitch two wounded communities into the same conversation. Voices from camps cut through the screen. A young Kuki woman from Kangpokpi asked for access to jobs and higher education. A Meitei woman broke down, pleading to return home after three years in a camp. Another Kuki-Zo inmate flagged the struggle to reach hospitals.

The CM promised security for Kuki-Zo patients visiting Imphal and special plans for about 6,000 displaced students whose schooling has been disrupted. "I'm no god, but I will not let your tears go in vain," Singh said.

Later, he repeated the message to reporters. "I'm no god. I can only try as much as possible. We are all human beings. We have 36 communities in Manipur and we have to move forward together."

DMDK joins DMK alliance, CM Stalin welcomes move

Chennai: After holding talks with both alliances in Tamil Nadu, DMDK chief Premalatha Vijayakant called on CM MK Stalin on Thursday to join DMK-led coalition for the upcoming assembly polls. This is the first time DMDK has tied up with DMK since Vijayakant founded the party in 2005. CM welcomed DMDK with a post on X. TNN

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL
(DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF HEALTH SERVICES)
22-SHAM NATH MARG, DELHI – 110054

PUBLIC NOTICE

Applications are invited for engagement of the Public Health Specialist Gr.-III, for a period of one year or till regular officers join, whichever is earlier, at NCDC, Delhi and its branches on contract basis through Screening cum Selection Mode at NCDC, 22-Sham Nath Marg (Near Civil Lines Metro Station), Delhi-110 054, as under:-

Name of the post	No. of posts	Details of Vacancy		Place of Posting
Public Health Specialist Gr.-III	14	UR	8	Delhi - 13 Varanasi - 1
		OBC	3	
		SC	1	
		EWS	1	
		ST	1	

The last date of submission of application is 06.03.2026. The application must reach this office on or before 06.03.2026, by speed post/ by hand on all working days from 10.00 AM to 5.00 PM at General Services Section, Room No. 202, NCDC, 22 -Sham Nath Marg, Delhi - 110054. Application received after 06.03.2026 will not be entertained.

After scrutiny of the application forms, only eligible candidates as per ToR will be informed through email to appear for interview with date and time.

The Educational Qualification, ToR and other conditions may be viewed on the NCDC Website: www.ncdc.mohfw.gov.in.

NOTE: The Competent Authority reserves the right to modify or cancel selection process (in part or full), if need so arises without issuing any further reasons whatsoever.

(Prakash Doval)
Assistant Director (Admin.)
Email: prakashdoval@ncdc.gov.in

CBC 17129/11/0015/2526

TATA INSTITUTE OF FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH
Survey No. 36/P, Gopanpally Village, Serilingampally Mandal
Ranga Reddy District, Hyderabad - 500046. Website: www.tifrh.res.in

Extension of Due Date : Advt. No. 2026/06

[illegible]

Head, Admin & Finance

RAJASTHAN STATE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Rajasthan Govt. Undertaking)
Udyog Bhawan, Tilak Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur-302005 (Rajasthan)

Revised Recruitment Advertisement

In continuation of the advertisement issued by the Corporation dated **20.01.2026** for recruitment to various posts, due to the increase in the number of vacancies for below posts, the last date for submission of online applications is hereby extended up to **07.03.2026**.

The details of the increased posts are as follows:

S. No.	Name of the Post	Pay Scale	Previously Advertised Posts	Newly Added Posts	Total Posts
1	Assistant Accounts Officer Grade-II	Pay Matrix Level -11	21	1	22
2	Junior Legal Officer	Pay Matrix Level -10	4	10	14
3	Personal Assistant Grade-II	Pay Matrix Level-10	8	11	19
4	Draftsman	Pay Matrix Level-8	8	1	9

Important Note:

- Apart from the above-mentioned cadres, there is no increase in the number of posts in the other cadres.
- The Corporation (RIICO) reserves the right to increase or decrease the number of posts as per requirement.
- Candidates who have already applied online for the advertised posts earlier are not required to apply again. They will be considered eligible based on fulfillment of the conditions mentioned in the original advertisement at the time of their earlier application.

Application Date:

The last date for submission of online applications is hereby extended up to **07.03.2026 (11:59 PM)**. Thereafter, the application link will be automatically disabled.

Detailed information regarding examination fee, application procedure, educational qualifications, other eligibility criteria, required certificates, and other instructions related to the examination is available on RIICO's official website.

All other terms and conditions of the original advertisement shall remain unchanged.

Raj.Samwad/C/25/20811

ADVISOR (A & M), RIICO

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL
MEDICAL EDUCATION & TRAINING, UTTAR PRADESH
6th Floor Jawahar Bhawan, Lucknow

No. ME-3/2026/363 Lucknow : Dated 18/02/2026

TIME SCHEDULE FOR "STRAY VACANCY ROUND" OF UP NEET PG COUNSELING 2025 (M.D./M.S./DIPLOMA & D.N.B.)

In accordance with the schedule issued by the Medical Counseling Committee (MCC), New Delhi for the NEET PG course, time **schedule for the Stray Vacancy Round** of online counseling for admission to state quota seats in postgraduate courses (M.D./M.S./DIPLOMA & D.N.B.) in government/private medical colleges/institutions/ medical universities is as follows :-

Sr.	Description	Dates	Total days
1-	Date of online registration	From 20.02.2026 (11:00 AM) To 23.02.2026 (09:00 AM)	03 Days
2-	Date of depositing registration and security money	From 20.02.2026 (11:00 AM) To 23.02.2026 (10:00 AM)	03 Days
3-	Date of Merit List Declaration	On 23.02.2026	01 Day
4-	Date of On-line Choice filling	From 23.02.2026 (12:00 AM) To 24.02.2026 (03:00 AM)	02 Days
5-	Date of Allotment Result Declaration	On 25.02.2026	01 Day
6-	Date for downloading the allotment letters & Admission	From 25.02.2026 to 28.02.2026	04 Days

As per the instructions contained in the government order/brochure of UP NEET PG 2025, candidates should assess their eligibility themselves.

Only those candidates will be eligible for choice filling who have completed the online registration process and who have deposited the required security amount.

The UP NEET PG 2025 information booklet (brochure) and important instructions are available on the websites **www.upneet.in** and **www.dgme.up.gov.in**. Keep visiting websites regularly for updated information.

Helpline Numbers: 8189011696, 8189011697, 8189011698, 8189011699, 8189011700

Director General
Medical Education & Training, UP

ICAR-NBSS & LUP, Hebbal, Bangalore-24

Walk-In-Interview

Temporary vacant posts to be filled in research project. For Details visit: **icar-nbsslup.org.in**

Assistant Admin Officer

सीएसआईआर-केंद्रीय विद्युतरसायन अनुसंधान संस्थान
CSIR-CENTRAL ELECTROCHEMICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE
कारैक्कुडी KARAIKUDI – 630 003

Notification No.PS - 01/2026

WALK – IN – INTERVIEW

A Walk-in-Interview will be conducted at CSIR-CECRI Chennai Unit, Taramani, Chennai on **06th March 2026** for engagement to the positions of **Senior Project Associate** (03 Nos.) and **Project Assistant-II** (01 No.) against various projects, on purely temporary basis, to work at CSIR-CECRI Chennai Unit, Taramani, Chennai.

Date of Commencement of ONLINE application: 20.02.2026

Last Date for submission of ONLINE Application: 03.03.2026

For complete details and application, please visit the opportunity page of CECRI website (https://www.cecri.res.in/)

प्रशासनिक अधिकारी / Administrative Officer

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to the public at large that, we are investigating and verifying the right, title and interest of Gwendoline Molly Panjwani (alias Gwendoline Molly Bescrana), age 90 years, an adult, of Bengaluru, Indian Inhabitant, holder of PAN:AETPP5868Q, having her address at Plot No. 57, 4th Cross, 1st Block, RMV 2nd Stage, Bengaluru – 560 094, Karnataka, India ("**Owner**") in respect of the property (collectively "**Property**") more particularly described in the **Schedule** hereunder written.

Any person/ entities including inter alia any individual, Hindu Undivided Family, a company, bank(s), and/or financial institution(s), non-banking financial institution(s), trust, a firm, an association of persons or body of individuals whether incorporated or not, lender(s), creditors(s), and or any authority having any claim, right, title, interest, share, demand whatsoever in respect of or against the Property or any part thereof by way of sale, transfer, assignment, exchange, mortgage, charge, bequeath, equitable easement, pledge, tenancy, license, lis pendens, lien, gift, trust, inheritance, possession, lease or encumbrance, sub-tenancy, care taker basis, occupation possession, family arrangements / settlements, FSI consumption, or TDR, development rights, partnership, decree or order of any court of law, contracts/agreements, lis pendens and/or any liability and/or any writing and/or any arrangement and/or any commitment or otherwise howsoever into, over or upon the Property howsoever or otherwise are hereby requested to intimate the undersigned in writing with all supporting documents within 14 (fourteen) days from the date of publication hereof, failing which, such claim, right, title or interest therein shall be deemed to have been waived and/or abandoned and/or released and shall not be binding in any manner whatsoever.

THE SCHEDULE ABOVE REFERRED TO

(Description of the Property)

ALL THAT piece and parcel of freehold residential plot bearing no.57 admeasuring 600 square meters or thereabouts (i.e. equivalent to 6458.35 square feet or thereabouts) (as per title documents) and 616.638 square meters or thereabouts (i.e. equivalent to 6637 square feet or thereabouts) (as per physical survey) having address at 4th Cross Road, 1st Block, RMV 2nd Stage, Bengaluru – 560 094 together with a bungalow comprised of ground plus first floor admeasuring in the aggregate 488.11 square meters or thereabouts (i.e. equivalent to 5254 square feet or thereabouts) built up area standing on the said plot no. 57 and the Property is bounded as follows:

On or towards the East by	:	Site No. 62
On or towards the West by	:	2nd Main Road
On or towards the North by	:	4th Cross Road
On or towards the South by	:	Site No. 58

Dated this 20th day of February, 2026.

For
LEXICON LAW PARTNERS
ADVOCATES & SOLICITORS

Sd/-
Partner

Mulla House, 4th floor,
51, M. G. Road,
Fort, Mumbai - 400 001.
Email id: **objections@lexiconlaw.in**

रजिस्ट्री सं. डी.एल. 33004/99 **REGD. NO. D.L.-33004/99**

भारत का राजपत्र
The Gazette of India

सी.जी.-डी.एल.-अ.-13022026-270108
CG-DL-E-13022026-270108

असाधारण
EXTRAORDINARY
भाग II - खण्ड-3 - उप-खण्ड-(ii)
PART II—Section 3—Sub-section (ii)
प्राधिकार से प्रकाशित
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

सं. 695] नई दिल्ली, बृहस्पतिवार, फरवरी 12, 2026/माघ 23, 1947
No. 695] NEW DELHI, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2026/MAGHA 23, 1947

MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
NOTIFICATION
New Delhi, the 12th February, 2026

S.O. 733(E). - Whereas by the notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, **4828 Dated:22/10/2025**, published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 3, Sub-section (ii) issued under sub-section (1) of section 3A of the National Highway Act, 1956 (48 of 1956) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government declared its intension to acquire the land specified in the Schedule annexed to the said notification for building (widening/four-laning, etc.), maintenance, management and operation of NH 748A in the stretch of land from Km 43+800 to Km 89+900 (Special Land Acquisition Officer, NHAI Bagalkot) in the district of BELAGAVI in the state of KARNATAKA.

And whereas the substance of the said notification has been published in "The Times of India" and "Vijayavani" both dated 30.10.2025; under sub-section (3) of section 3A of the said Act;

And whereas the Competent Authority has received objections filed under Section 3-C, considered and settled the same appropriately;

And whereas, in pursuance of sub-section (1) of section 3D of the said Act, the competent authority has submitted its report to the Central Government;

Now, therefore, upon receipt of the said report of the competent authority and in exercise of the powers conferred by the sub-section (1) of section 3D of the said Act, the Central Government hereby declares that the land specified in the said Schedule should be acquired for the aforesaid purpose.

And further, in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 3D of the said Act, the Central Government hereby declares that on publication of this notification in the Official Gazette, the land specified in the said Schedule shall vest absolutely in the Central Government, free from all encumbrances.

SCHEDULE

Brief description of the land to be acquired, with or without structure, falling within the NH 748A in the stretch of land from Km. 43+800 to Km. 89+900 (Special Land Acquisition Officer, NHAI Bagalkot) in the district of BELAGAVI in the state of KARNATAKA.

Scan for notification in English & Hindi

ಅಧಿಸೂಚನೆ ಕನ್ನಡದಲ್ಲಿ ಸ್ಕ್ಯಾನ್ ಮಾಡಿ

[F. No. NHAI/PIU-HPT/15052/LA-03/2021-22/3D]
SHAIKH AMINKHAN, Director

District: BELAGAVI
https://egazette.gov.in
Publication date: 20-02-2026
https://bhoomirashi.gov.in

Note : The physical copy of this notification is also available at the Office of SLAO&CA, Belagavi, Landowners may also see the notification there.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Under instructions of our client, we are issuing this notice as part of investigating the ownership, title and interest of individuals identified as 'landowners' (**Landowners**) in the table below, to lands totally admeasuring 26 guntas excluding 1 gunta of 'A' kharab, all situated at Venkatala Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk (earlier Bangalore North Taluk), Bengaluru District, Karnataka more particularly described in the **Schedule** shown below and collectively referred to as "**Schedule Properties**".

If any person/s, entity, firm, institution (corporate or otherwise) is having any claim/s any right, title, interest, pending litigation or demand of any nature in or upon the Schedule Properties or any part thereof or against any of the Landowners or with respect to Schedule Properties, the same may be brought to the notice of the undersigned in writing together with all details of the right, title, interest, claim, pending litigation or demand made together with supporting documents within ten (10) days from the date of this notice. Failing to do so, it shall be presumed that the title of the Landowners in relation to their respective extent of ownership of the Schedule Properties is clear, marketable and free from encumbrances of any kind whatsoever and no person has any right, title or interest of any nature whatsoever in the Schedule Properties or any part thereof and our client will then proceed to transact with the Landowners for the Schedule Properties. Claims or alleged interest, if any, which are not received within **ten (10) days** from the date of publication of this notice shall be deemed to have been waived and disregarded for all intents and purposes and shall not be binding on our client.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of agricultural lands totally admeasuring 26 guntas excluding 1 gunta of 'A' kharab, all situated at Venkatala Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk (earlier Bangalore North Taluk), Bengaluru District, Karnataka and bounded as follows:

Sl No.	Survey No.	Extent Acres	Extent Guntas	'A' Kharab (in guntas)	Present Owners	Boundaries East by:	West by:	North by:	South by:
1.	27/8	0	5	0	(i) Kanakamma, wife of late Nallappa (ii) Legal heirs of late Manjunath son of Nallappa and Kanakamma	Survey Nos. 27/16	Survey Nos. 27/17	Survey Nos. 27/1	Survey Nos. 28
2.	27/10	0	5	0	Krishnappa, son of late Munivenkatappa	Survey Nos. 27/11	Survey No. 32	Survey Nos. 27/2	Survey Nos. 27/17
3.	27/11	0	5	1	Munirappa, son of late Munivenkatappa	Survey Nos. 27/12	Survey No. 27/10	Survey Nos. 27/2	Survey Nos. 27/8
4.	27/12	0	1 ½	0	Motappa, son late Munivenkatappa	Survey Nos. 27/13	Survey No. 27/11	Survey Nos. 27/2	Survey Nos. 27/19
5.	27/13	0	1 ½	0	Munirappa, son of late Munivenkatappa	Survey Nos. 27/14	Survey No. 27/12	Survey Nos. 27/2	Survey Nos. 27/18 & 27/19
6.	27/14	0	1 ½	0	Krishnappa, son of late Munivenkatappa	Survey Nos. 27/15	Survey No. 27/13	Survey Nos. 27/2	Survey Nos. 27/1 & 27/16
7.	27/15	0	1 ½	0	Kanakamma, wife of late Nallappa	Survey Nos. 26	Survey No. 27/14	Survey Nos. 27/2	Survey Nos. 27/1
8.	27/17	0	5	0	Motappa, son of late Munivenkatappa	Survey Nos. 27/8	Survey No. 32	Survey Nos. 27/10	Survey Nos. 28
Total		0	26	1					

Date: 20-02-2026
Place: Bengaluru

Mridul Kumbalath, Partner, Trilegal
Advocate & Solicitors, 6th & 7th Floor, Marksquare, 61, St. Marks Road, Bengaluru - 560 001
T: 080 4343 4646

Scan to experience

The Tayron R-Line
For all your *ands*

Ex-showroom introductory price ₹ 46 99 000*

CARE EVER** 4 year Standard Warranty, 4 year Road Side Assistance, 3 Free Services

Exchange through **Certified Pre-Owned**

Call 1800 102 0909 **volkswagen.co.in**

*Price mentioned is ex-showroom introductory price . Terms and conditions apply. Images are for representation purpose. Actual colour of the car may vary. The dark shade on the glass is due to the lighting effect. **3 Free services applicable on 1 000 km, 7 500 km and 15 000 km. Only labour charges are free with servicing. To know more visit your nearest dealership.

Features and accessories shown may not be a part of standard equipment and are subject to change without prior notice.

Authorised Dealers: Volkswagen Bangalore East-Old Madras Road: 9513942174; **Volkswagen Bangalore North: Thanisandra: Mobile:** 8105583597; **Volkswagen Whitefield: B. Narayanapura: Mobile:** 9900010727, 9900021210; **Volkswagen Palace Cross: Mobile:** 7032397999, 9100995753; **Volkswagen Bangalore Central: Richmond Road: Mobile:** 7032397999, 9281147546; **Hesaraghatta (Sales Point): Mobile:** 9900049174; **Volkswagen Tumkur: Sira Main Rd: Mobile:** 7032397999, 9100919214; **Volkswagen Palace cross: Mysore Road:** 9900053496; **Volkswagen Mangalore:** (0824) 2433430, 2433530, 7829142030; **Bangalore North (Yelehanka):** 7032397999, 9100666023; **Volkswagen Hassan:** 9611586225; **Volkswagen City Store Volkswagen Palace Cross -** 9686601249, 9900064401.

Mobile: 7032397999, 9606988828; **Old Airport Road (Sales Point): Mobile:** 7032397999; **Volkswagen Bangalore: Hosur Road: Mobile:** 9686601249; **Volkswagen Bangalore South (JP Nagar): Mobile:** 7397738004; **Volkswagen Bangalore North: Hebbal: Volkswagen Palace Cross: Victoria Road (DWA): Mobile:** 9900035187; **Rajajinagar (Sales Point): Mobile:** 9900049174; **Volkswagen Hubli:** (0836) 2220000, 7760984531; **Volkswagen Belgaum:** (0831) 2477777, 9900022688, 9900022691; **Volkswagen Mysore:** 9611586240; **Volkswagen City Center (Lalbagh Road):** 7032397999, 9281096188; **Volkswagen City Store Koramangala:** 9952220000; **Volkswagen Shivamogga:** 9606024733; **Volkswagen Bangalore South (Thalakatapura):** 9952220000.

FIR against 'Yadav Ji Ki Love Story'

Meerut: An FIR was registered against the producer, director and lead actors of the upcoming film 'Yadav Ji Ki Love Story' in Sambhal following protests by members of the Yadav community and several political groups, **reports Rahul Singh.** The film is slated for release on Feb 27.

SP KK Bishnoi said film producer Sandeep Tomar, director Ankit Bhadana and actors Pragati Tiwari and Vishal Mohan have been booked under BNS section 353(2). "We have issued notices to the accused to join the investigation. We are expediting the probe ahead of the release. It is not clear where the movie was shot," said Bishnoi. The case stems from a complaint by one Arvind Yadav (25), who alleged that the "film misrepresents the community's culture and could disturb social harmony."

Hyd fintech founder arrested, ₹13k cr online racket busted

Investigators: Firm Functioned As Critical Gatekeeper

U.Sudhakarreddy @timesofindia.com

Hyderabad: A Rs 13,000 crore illegal online gaming network allegedly operating through shell firms, fake digital identities and compromised payment rails has been busted, with the arrest of fintech entrepreneur Pankaj Kumar, officials said Thursday.

Kumar, founder of Adsum Advisory Services Private Ltd, was taken into custody by the DG of GST Intelligence Wednesday evening and remanded in judicial custody a day later. Investigators alleged his firm functioned as a critical gatekeeper, clearing fraudulent KYC verifications that allowed shell entities to access banking channels regulated by RBI, enabling large-scale movement of funds linked to real-money gaming platforms.

ILLEGAL NETWORKS

DGGI officials said Adsum Advisory provided third-party fraud detection and customer verification services, including digital KYC, and allegedly facilitated onboarding of shell companies for UPI integration. These accounts were then used to route proceeds from illegal gaming sites, investigators alleged, adding that proper merchant risk profiling was bypassed in exchange for syndicate-linked proceeds.

The probe has widened into a broader crackdown on online gaming networks and associated financial intermediaries. India's online gaming sector is estimated at about $25 billion, or roughly Rs 2 lakh crore, in 2025, officials said. About Rs 100 crore in bank accounts has been frozen and multiple suspects arrested, officials said.

The case began after DGGI received inputs on online platforms offering real-money gaming around Hyderabad. Investigators zeroed in on two websites — famematch360.com and racejeet247.com — and tracked fund flows outward. As scrutiny expanded, officials said they uncovered an organised syndicate running illegal gaming websites with alleged support from fintech players, including payment aggregators, gateways and technology service providers.

Payment aggregators typically rely on third-party verifiers for merchant onboarding and KYC compliance. In this case, investigators alleged shell firms paid verifiers to clear onboarding without adequate scrutiny. Around 100 shell entities across the country were identified. Many allegedly filed GST returns reflecting minimal revenue while processing outsized transactions.

COMING UP

TOI presents a round-up of forthcoming key events and birthdays of notable personalities. Scan the QR code to post your wishes

Feb 20

Rihanna
Barbadian pop superstar and entrepreneur, founder of Fenty Beauty
rihanna
badgalriri

Feb 21

Abhijit Banerjee
Nobel laureate in Economics, known for using randomised trials to fight global poverty

Parthiva Sureshwaren
Former F2 racing driver and national champion
parthivsa

Feb 22

Lalduhoma
CM of Mizoram and former IPS officer
Lal_Duhoma
lalduhoma.cm

Ashok Amritraj
Former tennis player and Hollywood film producer
ashokamritrajofficial

Feb 23

Sabyasachi Mukherjee
Luxury fashion designer
sabya_mukherjee
sabyasachiofficial

Michael Dell
Founder, chairman, and CEO of Dell Technologies
MichaelDell
michaeldell

Bhagyashree
Actress best known for 1989 hit Maine Pyar Kiya
bhagyashree123
bhagyashree.online

Goa-Tamnar project: Deficiencies in K'taka plan flagged by govt

Niranjan.Kaggere @timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Months after Karnataka expedited the controversial Goa-Tamnar interstate power transmission project, the Union ministry of environment, forest and climate change (MoEFCC) flagged major deficiencies in the state's proposal, potentially delaying crucial forest clearances for the project aimed at strengthening power supply to South Goa. The regional office of MoEFCC in Bengaluru sought additional information and clarifications from the Karnataka forest department.

Reviewing the proposal last week, MoEFCC noted that the state did not submit the recommendation of the Project Screening Committee (PSC) as mandated under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023. Officials also pointed out the absence of recommendations from the deputy conservator of forests (DCF) and chief conservator of forests (CCF), Belagavi, though a significant stretch of the project passes through the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats under the Belagavi forest circle.

As the proposed land (32 hectares) for diversion falls within the Kali Tiger Reserve (KTR), MoEFCC directed the state to secure clearance from the standing committee of the National Board for Wildlife. The Centre also sought details of any pending court cases related to the project. Envisaged in 2015 by the Union Power ministry, the interstate power transmission line aims to ensure reliable electricity supply to Goa, which depends heavily on the western grid. Stretching 77 km from Narendra near Dharwad to Xeldem in South Goa, the transmission line facilitates the exchange of 1,200 MW of renewable energy between Karnataka and Goa.

The ministry further flagged inconsistencies in the compensatory afforestation (CA) land identified by the state. "Even though Karnataka stated 16 hectares of degraded forest land (DFL) at Varur-Nagalavi in Dharwad, the govt submitted a site suitability certificate only for 10 hectares, raising questions over the availability of the remaining 6 hectares," a MoEFCC official clarified. The project requires 174.622 hectares of forest land in 3 districts of Belagavi, Dharwad and Uttara Kannada. Out of this, nearly 32 hectares is protected forest land within Kali Tiger Reserve.

No engg degree: HC sets aside power transco MD's posting

Gaurav.Talwar @timesofindia.com

Dehradun: Uttarakhand high court (HC) has set aside the appointment of the managing director of Power Transmission Corporation of Uttarakhand Ltd (PTCUL), holding that the mandatory educational qualification under the Selection and Appointment of Managing Directors and Directors in the Three Corporations Rules, 2021, was not shown to have been lawfully complied with.

A divisional bench of Justice Ashish Naithani and Justice Subhash Upadhyay allowed three petitions, including PIL, challenging the appointment of Prakash Chandra Dhyani as managing director, and the court delivered its verdict on Wednesday.

The dispute centred on Rule 9A, which, after the 2021 amendment, requires possession of an engineering degree for the post of managing director. Petitioners argued that eligibility conditions under statutory rules cannot be diluted through executive discretion, and any determination of "equivalence" must be based on objective material and recorded before appointment.

"A graduate degree in engineering is an essential qualification for the managing director of PTCUL. HC has set aside the appointment of Prakash Chandra Dhyani as MD of PTCUL and directed the state govt to make an interim arrangement for the post until a regular selection is made as per the rules." said Kartikey Hari Gupta, the petitioner's lawyer. Notably, Dhyani was appointed as the managing director on Sept, 2022.

Banks must not blindly freeze a/cs in cyber fraud cases: HC

Prayagraj: There cannot be any discrimination or high-handedness in freezing bank accounts on the instructions of investigating agencies in cyber fraud cases, the Allahabad high court has said. Examining the procedure adopted by authorities in such cases, a division bench comprising Justices Atul Sreedharan and Siddharth Nandan noted on Feb 10 that banks often freeze accounts without providing much information to the account holders. The bench directed the Centre to address such concerns, adding that though various courts have dealt with the issue, procedural anomalies still exist. TNN

Mahua moves HC for pet's custody

Times News Network

New Delhi: TMC MP Mahua Moitra moved Delhi high court on Thursday challenging a district court order refusing to grant her shared custody of a pet rottweiler called Henry. The lawmaker had sought interim custody of Henry for 10 days every month.

HC sought the stand of Moitra's former partner and advocate, Jai Anant Dehadrai, on her appeal. Dehadrai appeared in person and said the petition should be dismissed at this stage itself, arguing that it had no merits. HC listed the case for hearing on April 29.

In her appeal, Moitra argued that the district court's decision was "bad in law and on facts" as it failed to consider that Henry was given to her as her pet "to be loved and cared for" and primarily resided at her residence, except when she was away on constituency duties, during which time the dog stayed with Dehadrai.

Advocate Dehadrai has argued that the dog was purchased by him in 2021. Moitra contended that owing to her friendship at the time with Dehadrai, she was entitled to joint custody of the pet. Last year, HC had advised the parties to "sit together" and sort out the dispute. Both claimed Henry belonged to them and accused each other of "kidnapping".

Thyroid, infection drugs get fresh safety warnings after nat'l review

Anuja.Jaiswal @timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Two medicines used widely — antibiotic doxycycline and thyroid drug carbimazole — will soon carry stronger safety warnings, following a national review of adverse drug reaction reports.

After examining patient-level safety data, regulators have flagged possible mental health symptoms linked to doxycycline and a rare but potentially life-threatening blood disorder associated with carbimazole. In separate communications issued this month, Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) directed all State and Union territory licensing authorities to ensure manufacturers update prescribing information and package inserts for both medicines and report compliance.

For doxycycline — commonly prescribed for respiratory infections, acne, sexually transmitted infections, urinary tract infection and numerous vector-borne diseases — the authorities have asked that specific central nervous system side effects be explicitly mentioned. These include restlessness, anxiety, irritability, nervousness and dizziness.

The decision follows an assessment by Pharmacovigilance Programme of India, which reviewed adverse reaction reports and individual case safety data. The issue was examined at a Signal Review Panel meeting in March 2025 and later discussed by Subject Expert Committee (SEC) on antimicrobial and antiparasitic drugs in Jan 2026, which endorsed updating the official prescribing documents.

HEALTH CHECK

Doxycycline (Antibiotic)
Used for | Respiratory infections, acne, STIs, UTIs, vector-borne diseases
Now, must mention CNS side effects:
- Restlessness
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Nervousness
- Dizziness

Carbimazole (Anti-thyroid Drug)
Used for | Hyperthyroidism, Graves' disease
Strong warning on: Agranulocytosis (Rare drop in white blood cells)
Watch for:
- Fever
- Sore throat
- Unexplained infections

While gastrointestinal discomfort and photosensitivity were known side effects of doxycycline, the latest directive adds neuropsychiatric symptoms to the safety profile. Regulators have directed manufacturers of carbimazole — prescribed for hyperthyroidism, including Graves' disease — to warn about agranulocytosis, a rare but serious condition marked by a sharp fall in white blood cells.

Agranulocytosis can leave patients vulnerable to severe infections. Early warning signs include fever, sore throat and unexplained infections. The recommendation emerged from the 26th Signal Review Panel meeting and was subsequently reviewed by SEC on endocrinology and metabolism before being approved for inclusion in prescribing information leaflet.

Dr Rommel Tickoo, director of Internal Medicine at Max Hospital, Saket, said the move reflects a maturing safety system. "CDSCO's decision on for doxycycline and carbimazole reflects a proactive and responsible pharmacovigilance system. While the medicines remain safe and effective when used appropriately, clearer warnings help both doctors and patients recognise rare but important side effects early. In the case of carbimazole, prompt attention to symptoms like fever or sore throat can be life-saving. Such regulatory steps strengthen patient safety without creating unnecessary alarm," he said.

For patients, the updated leaflets mean clearer information on risks. For clinicians, the advisory reinforces the need to counsel patients on warning symptoms and monitor use appropriately.

Metro Railway, Kolkata

Tender Notice for e-tendering is invited by Principal Chief Engineer, Metro Railway, Kolkata for and on behalf of the President of India for the following work: Name of work: Supply, installation, commissioning and operating of track based gauge face rail lubrication (electronic type) for 05 years at Noapara-Jai Hind Bimanbandar section of Yellow Line of Metro Railway, Kolkata. Approx Cost of Work: ₹ 2,10,81,120/-. Earnest Money: ₹ 2,55,400/-. Completion Period: 60 Months. Date and Time of Closing: 12.03.2026 at 12:00 hrs. The Tender Document and other details can be obtained from the website www.ireps.gov.in. Amendments/ Corrigendum, if any, would be hosted only on the website.
Abridged e-Tender Notice No.: Civil-2649-2026 (Open)
Follow us at: /metrorailwaykol /metrorailkolkata

Karnataka Public Works Department
Office of the Engineer-in-Chief, PRAMC, PWD, Bengaluru-560001
No.: EIC/PWD/05/PRAMC/2025-26 Date: 19.02.2026

SHORT TERM TENDER

The Executive Engineer, PRAMC, KPWD on behalf of Governor of Karnataka, invites Short-Term Tender for 23 Building works in Bagalakote, Chikkaballapura, Chikkamagaluru, Davanagere, Dharwad, Gadag, Haveri, Kolar, Mandya, Mysore, Shivamogga, Uttarakannada, Vijayapura, Belagavi Districts. Further details can be obtained from KPP Portal (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in) / from Office of Engineer-in-Chief, PRAMC (eicpramc@gmail.com) from **21.02.2026, 05:30 PM** onwards.

Sd/-, Executive Engineer, PRAMC, KPWD, Bengaluru
DIPR/CP/LC/5785/2025-26

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001
Corporate Identity No. U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website : www.pspcl.in (Contact number 9646118721)
Tender Enquiry No. QW-342/PO-W Dated 18.02.2026

Chief Engineer/Stores & Workshops Organization, Sarabha Nagar, PSPCL, Ludhiana, invites E-tender of Repair of 3-phase, 50 cycles, outdoor type, oil immersed, naturally cooled, Stack core type construction, OWP Aluminium Wound Distribution Transformers (Type Conventional) of capacity 200 KVA (w/o tap changer) with voltage ratio 11/0.433 KV conforming to ISS: 2026 (with latest amendments, if any) and 1180 part-1 (2014) complete with a first filling of oil conforming to ISS: 335/1993 (with latest amendments, if any)

Quantity = 200 Nos.

For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 18.02.2026 from 4.00 P.M. onwards.

NOTE :- Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001
Corporate Identity No. U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website : www.pspcl.in (Contact number 9646118721)
Tender Enquiry No. QW-339/PO-W Dated 18.02.2026

Chief Engineer/Stores & Workshops Organization, Sarabha Nagar, PSPCL, Ludhiana, invites E-tender of Repair of 3-phase, 50 cycles, outdoor type, oil immersed, naturally cooled, Stack core type construction, OWP Aluminium Wound Distribution Transformers (Type Conventional) of capacity 25 KVA with voltage ratio 11/0.433 KV conforming to ISS: 2026 (with latest amendments, if any) and 1180 part-1 (2014) complete with a first filling of oil conforming to ISS: 335/1993 (with latest amendments, if any)

Quantity = 10000 Nos.

For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 18.02.2026 from 4.00 P.M. onwards.

NOTE :- Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

GREATER VISAKHAPATNAM MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

T.N.No.01/2025-26/CE/SE(W)/EE(W)SH-II, Dt: 12.02.2026 (2nd Call)
Number of Works : 01 (One). Value of Works : Rs.389.90 Crores
Downloading starting Date : 13.02.2026 @ 5.00 PM
Last date for Submission of bid : 05.03.2026 @ 4.00 PM
Further Details at http://www.apeprocurement.gov.in
O/o the Executive Engineer (W/SH-II) Division.
Cell No.: 91878 98428. For Commissioner

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001
Corporate Identity No. U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website : www.pspcl.in (Contact number 9646118721)
Tender Enquiry No. QW-338/PO-W Dated 18.02.2026

Chief Engineer/Stores & Workshops Organization, Sarabha Nagar, PSPCL, Ludhiana, invites E-tender of Repair of 3-phase, 50 cycles, outdoor type, oil immersed, naturally cooled, Stack core type construction, OWP Aluminium Wound Distribution Transformers (Type Conventional) of capacity 16 KVA with voltage ratio 11/0.433 KV conforming to ISS: 2026 (with latest amendments, if any) and 1180 part-1 (2014) complete with a first filling of oil conforming to ISS: 335/1993 (with latest amendments, if any)

Quantity = 15000 Nos.

For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 18.02.2026 from 4.00 P.M. onwards.

NOTE :- Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
No.2, 2/1 and 2/3, Kalidasa Marg, 1st Main Road, Gandhinagar
Bengaluru - 560 009. Phone No. 080-22265383, website: www.kiadb.in
No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-DPR-06/2017/2025-26 Date: 19.02.2026

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

KIADB invites tender from reputed consultants/firms under two cover bid system having an office at Bengaluru with vast experience and proven record of similar nature of work for project mentioned below:-
Name of the work : Providing Consultancy Services for Preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) Economic Analysis, Survey, Plan, Design, Preparation of Estimates, Cost Structure etc., for Establishment of Knowledge, Wellbeing and Innovation City (KWIN City) at Phase-4 & ,Phase-5, Doddaballapura & Nelamangala Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District.
The last date and time of receipt of tender is : **11.03.2026** upto **4.00 pm.**
Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the E-Procurement Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/-
Chief Engineer-1, KIADB, Bengaluru
DIPR/CP/5762/Zen/2025-26

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN : U40109KA1999SGC025521)
No: CEC/SEC/EEC/AEEC/2025-26/758 Date: 19.02.2026

BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Mode Only)

Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited invites bids on KPPP portal for "Providing Internet of Things (IOT) Based Smart Office Automation solution to KPTCL HRD center, Hoody & Zonal offices at Bengaluru & Tumakuru (PHASE-I)".
The bids will be received through e-procurement portal only. The details regarding the subject enquiry in the e-procurement portal can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website: https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in with hyperlink "E Procurement KPTCL" or directly on to website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in after 20.02.2026 and the last date & time for receipt of bids as per KPP portal.
Any extensions of due date for bid submission will be intimated in the e-procurement portal. Any details required in this regard can also be obtained from the office of the undersigned during office hours. All Corrigendum's/Addendums shall be noticed by the bidders before the last date of submission of the bids.

Sd/- Chief Engineer (Civil), KPTCL, 8th Floor, Indhana Bhavana, Ananda Rao Circle, Bengaluru - 560 009

Government of Karnataka
(TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT)
Office of the Commissioner for Transport & Road Safety, 1st Floor, 'A' Block, TTMC Building, Shanthinagar, Bengaluru-560027. Ph: 080-22276433 e-mail: jcteeg-tran-ka@nic.in
No: CT/ENF-3/PR-09/2025-26 Dated: 19.02.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through Government of Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only)

Request for proposal is invited by the Transport Department from the eligible bidders for - Artificial Intelligence based Smart Enforcement System for Electronic Monitoring and Enforcement of Road Safety (Call-2). Interested bidders should submit the documents On-line through e-Procurement platform only. For more details please log on to e-procurement website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**
If any assistance is required please contact help desk at +91-8046010000 / +91-8068948777
Last date for submission of Bids is: 11-03-2026 upto 4.00 pm.
For clarifications please Contact: 080-22236698

Sd/-
Addl. Commissioner for Transport (E) (S) & Tender Inviting Authority, Bangalore

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
No.2, 2/1 and 2/3, Kalidasa Marg, 1st Main Road, Gandhinagar
Bengaluru - 560 009. Phone No. 080-22265383, website: www.kiadb.in
IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-85/2105/2025-26 Date: 19.02.2026

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

Tender under two cover bid system is invited for the work mentioned below as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Contractors who have got adequate financial resources, suitable construction equipments, technical man power & sufficient past experience for the following work as per the schedule given below:
Name of the Work : Formation of Industrial Layout, Including Construction of Flexible Pavement Road, RCC Side Drains, RCC Power Duct, RCC Chambers, RCC Storm Water Drains, RCC Cross Drainages, Laying of HDPE Pipes for Water supply Works etc., at Proposed Chintamani Industrial Area, Phase-I, Chikkaballapura District
The last date and time of receipt of tender is : **24.03.2026** upto **4.00 pm.**
Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/-
Chief Engineer-1, KIADB Bengaluru
DIPR/CP/5768/Zen/2025-26

GLOBAL INDUSTRY, GOVT LEADERS BACK OPEN, HUMAN-CENTRIC ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

"We aspire to produce global breakthroughs in compute architecture, foundation models and energy efficiency, designed in India, rooted in our values, powered by our talent and scaled for humanity. We will partner with the very best tech companies in the world, not as importers of intelligence, but as co-architects of a new AI century. I believe that social relevance, not momentary craze, should drive AI growth in India.
— MUKESH AMBANI | CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, RELIANCE INDUSTRIES

"This is the age of abundant intelligence. The scarce resources now are trust, stewardship, and human capability. Our next step is to build domain-centric, AI-optimised chips for specific industries — beginning with the automotive sector
— N CHANDRASEKARAN | CHAIRMAN, TATA SONS

"The PM spoke about keeping AI open to the world for the benefit of democratising it, as opposed to caging it and having it in the hands of a few. There seems to be a very clear message: engage with each other, make open standards, and AI should be available to all for the benefit of humanity
— SUNIL BHARTI MITTAL | FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN OF BHARTI ENTERPRISES

"The future of AI cannot be decided by a handful of countries — or left to the whims of a few billionaires... The message of this summit is simple: Real impact means technology that improves lives and protects the planet. So let's build AI for everyone — with dignity as the default setting
— ANTONIO GUTERRES | SECRETARY-GENERAL OF UNITED NATIONS

"Brazil advocates for a governance that recognises the diversity of national trajectories and ensures that AI strengthens democracy, social cohesion, and the sovereignty of countries. India throughout its history, has bequeathed to humanity extraordinary contributions in various fields of knowledge
— LUIZ INACIO LULA | BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT

Altman: India not just building, but shaping future of global AI

'Tools Must Be In Hands Of People, Not Select Companies'

Akhil George & Sidhartha

New Delhi: OpenAI CEO Sam Altman placed India squarely at the centre of global AI map, arguing that the world's largest democracy is not merely adopting AI at scale but shaping its trajectory.

"More than 100 million people in India use ChatGPT every week," he said at the AI Impact Summit on Thursday, adding that "more than a third of them are students". India, he noted, is now the fastest-growing market for Codex, OpenAI's coding agent. "The world's largest democracy is well positioned to lead in AI. Not just to build it, but to shape it and decide what our future is going to look like."

He also noted that it is becoming increasingly more affordable for countries in the Global South to use AI. The cost of OpenAI's models, he said, had come down by more than 1000x in 14 months, adding costs would continue to reduce dramatically in the coming times. High AI infrastructure costs make it difficult particularly for smaller companies and startups to generate returns on investment quickly.

AI summit

Altman said AI models in past few months had become so powerful that they are even discovering new knowledge. "There was a recent physics result that really seemed to amaze a lot of physicists," he said.

Altman's most arresting claim was that humanity may be only a couple of years away from early versions of true super-intelligence. If that proves correct, he said, "by the end of 2028, more of the world's intellectual capacity could reside inside of data centres than outside of them". He conceded he could be wrong, but noted that it was an issue that bears serious consideration. A super-intelligent system, he suggested, could one day do "a better job being the CEO of a major company than any executive" or outperform the best scientists in research.

However, he cautioned increasingly capable systems can be misused, noting in particular open-source bio models can be misused to create dangerous new pathogens.

He acknowledged concerns about concentration of AI in the hands of select companies and countries. The only path forward, he said, is to have democratised AI and put these tools in hands of people, even if it comes with some downsides. "All of my study of history suggests that concentrating AI power in the hands of one company or country, even if it was in the name of safety, would be a disastrously bad thing to do," he said.

Asked about fair compensation for traditional new media, Altman cited the US fair use principle to defend their use. "Our stance is that when we're displaying a quote from a news article or an opinion piece or something like that, we want to do that in a way where we can explore new business models with creators for training."

A delegate clicking a selfie with OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, Google DeepMind CEO and co-founder Demis Hassabis is also seen

Bits&Bytes

PM Modi's AI diplomacy blitz with global CEOs

PM Modi had a packed Thursday at AI Impact Summit, addressing global leaders and CEOs after inaugurating the event and joining the leaders' plenary. He later met over 50 top global tech CEOs. On the sidelines, Modi held bilateral talks with leaders of the Netherlands, UAE, Switzerland and Greece

IN-SPACe launches ₹6cr AI boost fund

India's space regulator Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) has launched a Rs 6 crore AI-inspired seed fund scheme to support startups developing AI applications in the space sector, reports **Surendra Singh.** Announced by director Vinod Kumar at the AI Impact Summit, the scheme will award Rs 1 crore each to five shortlisted applicants. AI is already used in satellite data processing, hazard detection and Vyommitra

T-Hub & French region forge startup corridor

Hyderabad-based T-Hub has partnered with France's Hauts-de-France region to create a structured Indo-French startup corridor, announced at the India AI Impact Summit, reports **Manash Gohain.** The collaboration will ease market entry, enable cross-border investments and link incubators, academia and investors

After G20, AI Summit sees 'Bharat' placard

At the India-AI Impact Summit, the name plate on the table behind which PM sat had 'Bharat' written instead of India. This is not the first time 'Bharat' has been used for the country at an official global event. During the G20 Summit held in Delhi in 2024, a 'Bharat' placard was kept before the PM

Nilekani: India will show how AI can improve lives

New Delhi: Why can't AI be applied to treating cows and other cattle, PM Narendra Modi quizzed Nandan Nilekani when the Infosys chairman met him on Jan 8 over AI's application for farmers.

Quick meetings were held by the PMO and an app went live in weeks on Feb 11, Nilekani recalled at a roundtable of global CEOs, emphasising the speed of AI diffusion in India.

The AI-powered solution is now helping 3.6 million farmers associated with Amul, he said. "This, to me, is an example of the speed of execution of AI decisions in India," he said, praising Modi's vision.

He said when CEOs come back in a few months, there will be many more applications and India will lead the world in showing how AI diffusion can improve the lives of people, productive discussions and are excited to help countries in national security," he said.

Addressing the sell-off in IT stocks amid fears around AI models, Amodei said the company is not trying to replace the existing industry but to work with it. He compared Anthropic to Lego blocks, saying other companies build on its models. However, he acknowledged that some disruption is inevitable.

Earlier in the day, he said India could see 20-25% economic growth driven by AI-led productivity gains.

"It sounds absurd, and is unknown anywhere in the world. But as I think about this, it kind of stacks all the factors for a very bullish picture of how that growth could happen. India has technical capabilities and eagerness to adopt AI... India almost seems like a perfect case study that AI can accelerate economic growth because AI will help tie together the base ingredients already present here," he said.

He said Anthropic is making a concerted push to improve its models' performance in Indic languages.

Amodei red-flags autonomous weapons & mass surveillance

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Anthropic has raised concerns about development of fully autonomous weapons without a human in the loop and mass surveillance of US citizens, its co-founder and chief executive Dario Amodei said.

Speaking to a TV channel on the sidelines of the AI Impact Summit on Thursday, he said these red lines are critical and it is essential to ensure AI is used in a way that is compatible with democracy and aligned with the company's values.

He was responding to a question on whether the company could face blacklisting by the US govt because of its restrictions on how the technology is used. "We continue to have productive discussions and see

India could see 20-25% economic growth driven by AI-led productivity gains, Amodei said

Bill Gates skips summit amid Epstein scrutiny

New Delhi: After days of speculation, **Bill Gates** did not deliver his scheduled keynote at the AI Impact Summit 2026, with the Gates Foundation announcing the decision just hours before the address on Thursday.

The Foundation had stated a day earlier that the keynote will go ahead as planned. However, Thursday morning, it was announced on X that the Microsoft founder will skip the speech. In a brief statement, the foundation said the decision was taken "after careful consideration" to ensure that attention remains on the summit's key priorities.

Gates' case due to deliver a short but high-profile address on opportunities and risks linked to artificial intelligence. His withdrawal comes amid renewed public discussion around his past association with the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, following release of emails bearing his name in late Jan. In recent weeks, some opposition parties and social media users in India had questioned whether Gates' presence at the summit was appropriate.

Despite the debate, preparations appeared unchanged earlier this week. On Tuesday, the Foundation's India office had posted that Gates would attend the summit and deliver his keynote as scheduled.

The Foundation — said Ankur Vora, president of its Africa and India offices, would deliver the keynote in Gates' place. The Foundation added that it remains fully committed to its work in India to advance shared health and development goals. TNN

Delhi pitch: AI must go beyond English, solve real problems

Manash Gohain
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: India on Thursday made a clear pitch — AI must work in many languages, solve real problems, and serve societies beyond a small, privileged group, and got leaders of tech giants to adopt the 'New Delhi Frontier AI Impact Commitments' — a voluntary framework aimed at diffusing the benefits of AI among developing and underdeveloped countries, and the Global South.

Unveiled at the AI Impact Summit by IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, the commitments bring together global frontier AI firms and Indian innovators to promote responsible, inclusive, and culturally sensitive AI. The emphasis is on real-world use rather than high-level declarations.

The framework outlines two key commitments adopted on the first day of the summit.

The first focuses on transparency and data. Participating organisations will publish anonymised and aggregated statistical insights on how AI is being used across sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, education and public services. The aim is to build a clearer picture of AI adoption across economies and regions, helping govts design evidence-based policies on workforce

Vaishnaw said the goal is to link innovation with inclusion

transition, skills and productivity, while also tracking how AI use evolves over time.

The second commitment addresses a long-standing gap in AI — language. Most AI systems today perform best in English, with uneven results across other languages and cultural settings. Under the new framework, organisations will work to assess and improve AI performance across a wide range of languages and contexts. This includes collaborating with govts, researchers and civil society to develop datasets, benchmarks and evaluation methods for under-represented languages, particularly those spoken in the Global South.

Describing the New Delhi commitments as a key outcome, Vaishnaw said the initiative was designed to link innovation with inclusion.

AI misalignment: Altman vs Amodei rivalry now on stage

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: At the AI Impact Summit on Thursday, there was a "caught-off-guard moment" on stage. When PM Narendra Modi invited tech leaders to join him on the dais for a group photo, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei and OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, who ended up standing next to each other, stopped short of holding hands.

Instead, the two AI rivals stood beside each other with arms crossed — a subtle but noticeable gesture that stood out during the otherwise celebratory moment.

The moment when Altman and Amodei chose not to join hands on stage quickly went viral across social media platforms. The optics drew attention at a time when rivalry between OpenAI, the maker of ChatGPT, and Anthropic, which develops Claude, sharpened. Both companies aggressively compete to position their models as the preferred AI assistant for users globally, intensifying an already high stakes battle for global dominance.

Altman later clarified in a media statement, "I was sort of confused... (PM) Modi grabbed my hand and put it up, and I just wasn't sure what we were supposed to be doing."

While CEOs of other companies joined hands, Amodei and Altman stood uneasily their elbows touching.

Altman and Amodei worked together at OpenAI till 2018. Amodei, his sister, Daniela and a group of researchers, left the company in 2020 due to disagreements with Altman and the board over the company's direction, and subsequently set up Anthropic.

Earlier this month, Altman hit out at Anthropic after the latter used a Super Bowl campaign to criticise a potential introduction of advertising within ChatGPT. The ads characterised such a move as a "betrayal". The TV ads positioned its own Claude chatbot as permanently ad-free.

Altman called this campaign "dishonest" and defended his company's strategy of using ads, being different from what Anthropic portrayed. "We are not stupid and know our users would reject that... I guess it's on brand for Anthropic doublespeak to use a deceptive ad to critique theoretical deceptive ads that aren't real, but a Super Bowl ad is not where I would expect it," he had said in a social media post.

AI is the biggest platform shift of our lifetimes, says Pichai

Supriya.Roy@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Recounting a recent ride in a fully autonomous Waymo vehicle in San Francisco with his 83-year-old father, Google CEO **Sundar Pichai** said the real test of progress is when such systems can operate on India's roads.

"Back in my days in India, I couldn't have imagined that one day I would spend time with teams building data centres in space... Seeing a Waymo ride past my dad's house, I saw whole new progress. Of course, he said he'd be more impressed if it worked on India's busy roads. Still working on that one, Dad," he shared.

The anecdote framed a broader point — AI advanced rapidly, but its benefits must be made accessible across diverse and complex markets.

Pichai reiterated Google's $15 billion investment to establish a full-stack AI hub and expand digital infrastructure in the country. The initiative forms part of a wider connectivity push linking India deeply into global data networks.

Describing AI as "the biggest platform shift of our lifetimes," Pichai said the technology is enabling breakthroughs in science and healthcare. Pichai acknowledged that AI will reshape the workforce, automating some tasks and creating new categories of jobs.

VIRTUAL VELOCITY

A participant tries an AI-based race simulator during the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi on Thursday

'Don't want to depend on one or two powerhouses, want to create our own AI'

Outgoing PM of the Netherlands, **Dick Schoof**, *in an interview with* TOI's **Sidhartha**, *says he is worried over concentration of AI development, and calls for lowering dependence on a few economies, while underlining the need for responsible use of the technology. Excerpts:*

What has been the focus here?

■ China and the US both have their AI strategy. It was important that we had a meeting in India as we don't want to be dependent on one or the two powerhouses, we want to create our own artificial intelligence. That was also one of the main themes. The other theme is that we want responsible AI, not only AI for profit or control, but responsible AI to do with human values of privacy and reliability.

So, there is a concern over concentration risk as most of the AI innovation and development is happening in the US or in China.

■ Yes, and it goes into the bigger picture. In Europe, we have a lot of discussions these days that we don't want to be too dependent on only one company or country. We want to diversify. That's also why the EU has a lot of new trade agreements, including with India, but also relates to other issues. Europe is stepping up its defensive spending within NATO because of the threat of Russia. We don't want to be too dependent on the US and the same is true for other economies. It's more about autonomy but at the same time about partnerships with different countries.

Is this also a signal that Europe hasn't done enough in the last few decades to stay ahead of the curve in terms of new technologies and innovation?

■ Everybody in Europe agrees that we are lagging behind and we have to step up, especially in high tech, biotech, etc. We are now having a lot of discussions on how to achieve that and have funds for innovation and making sure that we step up on renewable energy, AI, high tech, data centres, etc.

How does India fit into this scheme of things?

■ India is a very interesting partner because it is now stepping up rapidly and successfully in the field of high tech and AI. For example, we have in the Netherlands ASML, well known for its lithography machines to create many chips. It has a big ecosystem in the Netherlands, and a lot of Indians are working there. We can work together because India has such a huge talent base. ASML is also discussing with the Indian govt whether it can use their machines and build a chip factory in India.

Regulation is something which is an area of concern for innovators and for companies in AI. How do you balance the two?

■ It's important to balance, or you can very easily over-regulate. But there should be safeguards that AI is reliable.

You have called for a systemic pressure on Russia to end the war with Ukraine. What role do you see India playing in this?

■ India has a special relationship with Russia and as PM Narendra Modi said, he wants peace, just as we do. So maybe he can use that special relationship. We are not putting pressure on India, we are putting pressure on Russia, and we want them to end the war.

India has been buying oil from Russia and there has been pressure from the US to stop that. Europe, including the Netherlands is buying processed fuel from India and you also buy LNG from Russia. How do you address this and should India stop buying oil from Russia?

■ First, we are in the process of having no energy from Russia at all and probably will reach that point in one or two years. There are some other countries that are still using oil from Russia. We put pressure on them because oil is one of the main incomes for Russia.

TOI INTERVIEW

Why one Dutch company is indispensable to the chip universe

Every chip in every device you own started out as a blank silicon wafer containing circuit patterns, whose smallest details are about 20,000 times thinner than a strand of human hair. These patterns are drawn by light so fine that it's invisible to the human eye.

The process is called lithography, the modern day equivalent of printing for chips. When it comes to the fastest and most advanced chips, only one company in the world has the machines to do it. And that is ASML, which was founded 40 years ago in the Netherlands and today has a monopoly on extreme ultraviolet (EUV) lithography machines, which it spent 20 years developing.

ASML makes around 40 of these machines in a year for chipmakers, like TSMC (the Taiwanese chipmaking near-monopolist, which itself has a 70% share of the semiconductor market), Samsung and Intel. And it works with other firms that, like ASML, have figured out solutions to very specific and hard problems — like the German firm, Trumpf, which builds high-power lasers, and German optical systems maker, Zeiss, which makes the mirrors that ASML uses in its machines.

While there are companies that can make lithography machines, they can't make EUV lithography machines. It's not that no one tried. Nikon spent about 20 years trying to develop EUV lithography systems before it stopped, about a decade ago, because the investments needed were "enormous". TNN

CONTRAPUNTO

Extinction is the rule.
Survival is the exception
- CARL SAGAN

Summits & Realities

There'll be no global cooperation in AI. But Indian entrepreneurs can pick their niches

Around this time six years ago, world was waking up to dangers of a brand-new virus. Was Covid a manmade pandemic? We still don't know. What we do know is that AI, which is in its infancy, already has, or is close to acquiring, knowledge to "create and release" biological weapons. In an essay titled 'The Adolescence of Technology', Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei warned last month that AI could guide "someone of average knowledge and ability" to do so. That's why, as India AI Impact Summit winds down, Modi's call for AI to be guided by clear human values is significant.

Every global AI summit, starting with Bletchley Park in 2023, has closed with a declaration of guiding values. And safety has been a running theme. India's latest mantra for AI development is MANAV – Moral, Accountable, National, Accessible and Valid. It's a laudable goal, but the reality of AI market makes it hard to practise. That reality was on display on the Summit floor Thursday, when Amodei and rival Sam Altman refused to hold hands for the camera. Let's be clear, AI is evolving amid cut-throat competition. None of the big names has revenues to justify its stratospheric valuation. It's a winner-takes-all game, so everyone is intent on outrunning everyone else. Cooperation? That's a three-legged race. Ethics? They require slowing down sometimes, and even changing course.

Forget AI, global cooperation on anything at all – peacekeeping, trade, climate, nuclear arms – seems passé these days. Let's hope it happens, but assume it won't as India goes about growing its AI capabilities. That opens two paths for us. One, as the backroom – not in a bad way – of the big players. Our scientists research, develop, test and implement models for foreign firms, gaining know-how. But we don't compete with the likes of ChatGPT and Gemini, because we don't have hundreds of billions of dollars to do so. The other path leads to more indigenous foundational models, like Sarvam's 105B and 30B, tailored for India's needs, and AI apps based on them as well as foreign LLMs. Like we said yesterday, AI is not one race. Indian firms will need to pick their niche and excel there. It could be AI for the garment units of Tirupur, or the coffee growers of Coorg, or even an early-warning system for pandemics. Govt can enable this AI revolution by improving ease of doing business, and providing funding for critical projects. Indian enterprise can take it from there.

Epstein Pals & 'Epsteining'

Andrew's arrest says something good about UK. But no one, anywhere, is investigating the real story

Royals are a big deal for the Brit establishment. Therefore UK cops arresting Andrew – an ex-prince is still a big deal – speaks to some institutional integrity, especially when in other countries, US included, no Epstein pal is being questioned for anything. That said, it's not clear that British police is going to investigate Andrew's alleged involvement in Epstein-organised abuses or just question him on leaking trade info to Epstein. Yes, Andrew was stripped of his title, just as Peter Mandelson was sacked from his envoy's job in Washington. Other notables like Bill Gates, Lawrence Summers, assorted minor famous people in Europe have suffered PR damage. Some of that damage may be permanent. But the question survives: who's being investigated for 'Epsteining' with Epstein?

In the few countries that have followed up after files were released under Epstein Files Transparency Act, 2025, investigators are probing how those in high offices, with insider knowledge and elite access, allegedly bypassed institutional governance structures to create elite power networks. That's important. Public office in democracies is built on some notion of integrity and moral responsibility. Yet many of the world's most powerful were perfectly comfortable associating with a convicted sex offender. Much effort is now being spent to draw a distinction between those who "merely met" Epstein as a fixer and those who were part of his paedophilia network.

But it is unlikely the full story or scale of Epstein's murky world will ever be known or publicly established. Redactions by US govt themselves invite justified suspicion. Too many powerful interests are likely vulnerable to a full inquiry. Some would argue that investigations into specific people need some prima facie evidence. But how do we know whether or not there's evidence when we don't know the entirety of Epstein files? Or without preliminary inquiries that look to find specific evidence? Simple questions govts won't answer.

Apple a day

While not the 'Mother of deals', the Indo-US trade agreement could prove fruitful for us

Jug Suraiya

Though not quite the 'Mother of deals' as the Indo-EU trade pact was gushingly described, the Indo-US handshake on trade might, continuing the family analogy, be called the Aunty-ji of deals, or bearing Uncle Sam in mind, the Chachaji of deals.

While Indian exporters have welcomed it, as have Harley-Davidson enthusiasts, Opposition has slammed the trade pact as a "blow to the stomachs of India's 120mn farmers" by allowing the import of US agri products.

I am not an exporter of anything to US, not even of myself temporarily as a tourist to Trumpistan from where I'd probably get deported as a suspected illegal migrant, and I have never mastered the discipline of riding a bicycle let alone a motorcycle, so the ingress of Harley-Davidson's mean machines doesn't bowl me over.

As I'm not a farmer, I don't feel punched in the stomach by the trade deal. Indeed, my stomach has responded enthusiastically to the declaration of our commerce minister, Piyush Goyal, that India will import US apples for ₹80 a kilo, even as we keep our farmers fully protected.

jugularvein

The last time I looked, Indian apples of various colours were selling for between ₹220 and ₹280 a kilo. The unasked question is how come Indian apples cost three times as much as apples that travel all the way from the far side of the world, creating a gigantic carbon footprint as well as a possible shortage of apples in America for US moms to make apple pie the way they used to.

Whatever the reason for the exorbitant price of India-grown apples, it likely prevents the farmers themselves from being able to afford to eat them.

With American apples at eighty bucks a kg, everyone, farmers and all, will enjoy them. And our apple growers can switch to the cottage industry of making agri helmets for all those people whizzing about on Harley-Davidson bikes.

And everyone will agree that the Indo-US deal is the apple of our collective 'eye'.

AI: Top Ten & Top Tensions

This tech is not a story about LLMs & machines, but about less than a dozen people, who're often battling each other, shaping how the tech evolves. Subplot: who will be remembered & who'll be forgotten

Arnab Ray

LA-based computer scientist

Whether AI will replace, destroy or continue to serve us, we do not know yet. But this much is certain: the story of AI will always be one of people, those who made it, those who sold it, those who made money off it, and those who told us how it all will end.

Play a word association game with "AI", and two names will immediately come up: **Sam Altman** and Elon. Altman is the Jobs of the AI age, CEO of OpenAI, the soft-spoken salesman of generative AI who made "ChatGPT" a verb like "Google" and "Xerox". Like Jobs, he too is a man you do not mess with, as the OpenAI board that tried to fire him found out when they got fired themselves. To take him on, you need to be the Kong to his Godzilla, and who else can be that except Elon, once-friend turned sworn adversary.

All Things AI

Elon Musk and Altman started OpenAI, note the "open" in its name, as a means of ensuring that Google's AI powerhouse, DeepMind, and other major players in Big Tech did not end up owning and cartelising AI.

Then, Altman wanted to partner with Microsoft, close-sourced ChatGPT's model, becoming bigger than Big Tech, doing exactly the thing that OpenAI was built to guard against. At least, that's Musk's story. Altman would say it was about power, Musk wants it, and all of it. And as to whether Musk wants to run the world, I think we all kind of know the answer to this one.

But Musk is not Altman's only bête noire, and not even the most formidable. That would be one of those who made the AI, the Wozniak to Altman's Jobs, OpenAI's chief scientist and co-founder, widely regarded as one of the most brilliant minds in deep learning, **Ilya Sutskever**. He sided with the board in the coup that failed, and, as it happens to those who aim for the king and miss, he fell on his sword and left OpenAI.

His concern was that Altman was prioritising profit over "AI safety", immediate gain over larger social good. The way Sutskever saw the world was that the AI that had been developed at OpenAI was too powerful a tool to be put in the hands of humans, without cleverly constructed guardrails.

If you think Sutskever was imagining a world of Terminator where sentient machines take over, he was not. His concerns were about what humans would do with the machine, not what the machine would do to humans. The danger was never artificial intelligence. It was natural stupidity and greed, amplified at scale, at speed, and with no one's hand on the brake. And Altman, the way Sutskever saw it, did not care beyond immediate profits and headlines.

Sutskever did not arrive at these fears alone. He had a teacher, and that teacher was **Geoffrey Hinton**, Turing Award winner (computer science's Nobel), and also Nobel Prize winner. In 1986, Hinton co-authored the paper on backpropagation, the mathematical engine under the hood of every AI model you have ever used.

In 2023, on seeing the capabilities of the initial versions of ChatGPT, he left Google so he could voice his concerns without corporate filters, concerns that the science he created is being weaponised and would exacerbate inequality in the world, that generated AI would change the nature of truth, and hand over tools of mass deception to humans that the human mind was not equipped to handle.

And then there is **Dario Amodei**, who left OpenAI over the same safety concerns that haunted Sutskever and Hinton, and built Anthropic on the belief that how you build matters as much as what you build. Whether a more careful hand on the same technology produces a different world is a question we do not yet have the answer to.

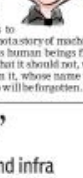
Wait, does everyone who ends up working in the frontiers of AI, also end up with genius's remorse? Is that the real danger of AI? No. Say hello to **Andrej Karpathy**, who worked for both Altman and Musk, first at OpenAI and then at Tesla, where he built the AI brain behind Autopilot, the system that put deep learning to the drive. He is now the world's foremost AI educator and thought leader, along with **Andrew Ng**, whose online courses did as much as anyone bringing the technology of AI to those that are scientifically inclined.

And then there is the house that refused to panic. While Altman was the first off the blocks with ChatGPT, Google got the "Sharma ji ka beta" treatment from its shareholders: why did this kid we never heard about get a gold medal and what have you been doing? And it's not that Google did not have its own geniuses. There was **Dennis Hassabis**, Brian Lara to Sutskever's Sachin, a former chess prodigy, and Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry, the man behind DeepMind, whose AlphaFold solved a 50-year-old protein folding problem that biologists had given up on...with AI.

Faced with market pressure, **Sundar Pichai**, the unflappable CEO of Google, stood up, integrating Google's own Gemini into Google search, extending Google's near monopoly in search to AI, drawing the battle lines for a war of algorithms.

Finally, there is the guy who sold the pickaxes for the AI gold rush, **Jensen Huang**, CEO of Nvidia. Once known for selling high-end graphics cards for gamers, Nvidia became the first company in the world to reach a $5tn market cap, on the basis of their GPUs that run the algorithms on which the Geminis, Claudes and ChatGPTs run.

What creates a moat for them is not the hardware but the software layer they built on top, which is what every foundational AI stack plugs into. Switching away from Nvidia isn't just expensive, it's like trying to rewire your brain to think in a different language.



Which brings us to what AI has become: not a story of machines but one of control, as human beings fight over what it can do, what it should not, who owns it, who profits from it, whose name will be remembered, and who will be forgotten.

'If It Works For India, It'll Work Globally'

Functionality across a big country's diverse income levels, geographies, languages, and infra constraints is a great test for every technology's resilience & adaptability, writes ex-CEO of Niti Aayog

Amitabh Kant

India is among the world's largest producers and consumers of data. Hundreds of millions of users interact daily across platforms spanning finance, commerce, health, education, mobility and governance. These data flows reflect real conditions rather than controlled environments. AI systems trained and deployed in India must function across income levels, geographies, languages, and infra constraints. Solutions that work in India are therefore inherently resilient and adaptable. They in fact, hold the key to bringing about scale and scale at a global level.

If AI solutions can work for 1.4bn people, they can work for the world. If the world is entering the age of AI, this is India's decade to define how that age unfolds. Its combination of scale, infra, talent, and deployment experience is what gives the country a distinctive position in the global AI landscape. India is well placed to lead the conversation across five critical dimensions.

Debate must shift to real-world impact | Global discourse on AI has centred on speculative risks, governance frameworks, and distant scenarios. These discussions should not crowd out the urgent opportunities AI presents today. And India's focus is on how AI can improve healthcare delivery, expand access to quality education, enhance agri productivity, strengthen public services, and make governance more responsive. For this, we need deployed solutions and scalable models, anchoring the conversation in what is already working and what can be rapidly expanded.

People and planet must sit at the heart of AI design | Technology cannot be separated from the societies in which it operates. AI systems must be inclusive by design, ensuring access for citizens, small enterprises, and public institutions, not only large corporations. They must support sustainability goals, from climate resilience to resource efficiency. And they must contribute to equitable growth and job creation. These pillars reflect the priorities of emerging economies, where development outcomes remain the central benchmark for technological success.

Democratising access to AI is essential | There is a growing risk that AI capability becomes concentrated in a few countries and companies, reinforcing new forms of dependency. India's approach stresses broad-based access: enabling startups beyond major metropolitan centres, supporting women-led innovation, building public sector capacity, and expanding skills development at scale. AI must function as an enabling layer across the economy, not as an exclusive capability available to a narrow elite.

AI progress must now move to deployment | The world has no shortage of strategies. What it needs is execution. India's strength lies in building implementation frameworks that convert ambition into action. Structured innovation challenges, collaborative investment platforms, and working groups connecting policymakers, industry, and academia can all translate dialogue into deployment. Focus must be on scaling what works and on building pipelines for partnerships and applied solutions that deliver measurable value.

AI's energy challenge must be answered with acceleration of clean energy | Data centres and clean power are no longer passive inputs for large tech and industrial firms. They are now central to expansion strategies, capital allocation, and long-term competitiveness. Global hyperscalers increasingly plan compute capacity energy sourcing, and sustainability together, often investing directly in generation, storage, and grid infra. As a result, countries able to mobilise affordable, and low-carbon power has become a decisive factor in where digital infra is deployed, reshaping global capital flows and favouring countries that can offer compute and clean energy as an integrated proposition.

Our country's experience with digital public infra demonstrates that when foundational tech is treated as a public good, it unlocks private innovation at unprecedented scale. Applying this logic to AI can ensure that its benefits are widely distributed rather than narrowly captured. This will require continued investment, open standards, responsible data governance, and sustained international cooperation.

India is already moving to translate its AI trajectory into durable capability and shared progress. This includes initiatives such as the IndiaAI Mission, which is building common national compute capacity, shared datasets, and support for indigenous models and startups, alongside continued investment in digital public infra and open, interoperable platforms. Budget 2026's tax holiday for AI data centres and enhanced funding for IndiaAI Mission will further propel this trajectory, drawing massive global investments and solidifying India's leadership in scalable AI deployment.

Within this broader effort, the AI Impact Summit was an important step, serving as a platform for govts, tech leaders, startups, researchers, and civil society from across the Global North and South. By anchoring the global AI conversation in impact, India is offering a model that speaks not only to its own priorities, but to the aspirations of much of the world.

Calvin & Hobbes

Sacredspace

Shiv, the Cosmic Dancer, is perhaps the most perfect personification of the dynamic universe. Through his dance, Shiv sustains manifold phenomena, unifying all things by immersing them in his rhythm and making them participate in the dance.

Fritjof Capra

Aadi Anant: From Here To Eternity

Narayani Ganesh

From Dec to mid-Jan, Chennai is a mecca for music lovers with its hugely popular festival of performing arts, culminating in Pongal festivities that celebrate the harvest. One such concert by Ashwini Bhide of the Jaipur Gharana, organised by National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA), stood out not only for a superb performance but also for the tagline that read: Aadi Anant – from here to eternity, the timelessness of Indian music.

Suvarnalata of NCPA points out that the concept of eternity is integral to Indian philosophy, where time is viewed as being cyclic rather than linear. "In Tantric Buddhism, too, the concept of cyclical time, Kalachakra, points to an incessant cycle of existence and knowledge. Human history shows that even the greatest of civilisations thrived only for a specific period. But the wisdom and experience collected over generations seem to live on, setting the tone for the overarching philosophy of a specific community," she says.

Creative minds emerge in every generation, leading to exploration of new horizons. Creative expressions may be rooted in tradition, but they also bloom in contemporary thought processes, leading to a blending of tradition and modern expressions. Says Suvarnalata, "The process is vital for ushering in changes that help to refresh and redefine traditions, which otherwise might remain stagnant and risk slowly becoming irrelevant, eventually to perish, over the years."

Culture, many aspects of which are often confused with dogmatic religion, tends to adapt and evolve over time, discarding a few things and embracing other, newer elements, in its effort to stay relevant and contemporary rather than get fossilised and forgotten. Just as language, cuisine, dress, birth and death rituals are all cultural, so, too, creative expressions like the performing arts and other art forms like painting and sculpture tend to evolve with time even as some stay purely traditional, with their own flavour of time, space and context. So, you have fusion, innovation, and you have pure tradition, each with its own space.

THE SPEAKING TREE

Religion, spirituality and culture are not cast in stone. All of these evolve with time, just as our own thoughts and behaviours do. Change is of the essence. The only aspect that perhaps remains constant is ethical considerations – that no act should hurt another. No stepping on another's toes. Ahimsa *paramo dharm* – Non-violence is the supreme dharm, duty. Anything that is eternal, timeless, infinite, cannot be bound. For, the nature of anant is boundlessness. There are infinite ways to invite joy and happiness into our lives.

Adi Anant is another name for Shiv, who with neither origin nor end, is said to exist even when nothing else does, for he is a symbol of creation, sustenance and destruction in an endless cycle, just as time is cyclical. A legend talks of how Brahma and Vishnu were in an argument and Shiv intervenes, asking them to look for his beginning and end. He takes the form of a blazing pillar of light, *jyotirlingam*. Vishnu took the form of a boar and dug deep to find the source. Brahma became a bird and flew high up to observe the end. Neither were successful because what they were looking for was beginningless and endless – *aadi* and *anant*.

ganeshnarayani@yahoo.com

TIMES BUSINESS

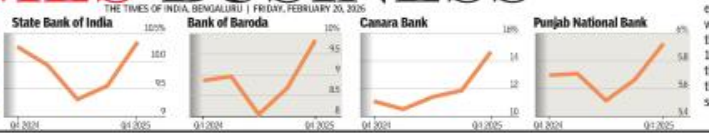
THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2026

PSU Banks' Stocks Outshine AI Hype As Foreigners Buy

The old guard of the financial sector has been leading the gains in the nation's stocks. State-run banks are bucking a broader foreign pullback from the country's equities, drawing inflows as lenders offer better valuations and stronger growth prospects. Foreign investors increased their stake in top state-run lenders to the highest in at least a year, shareholding data as of Dec 31 show

Source: BSE; Bloomberg

Foreign Investors Raise Stake in State-Run Lenders



The optimism has extended into 2026, with a gauge tracking these banks gaining 12% from the start of the year to emerge as the best performing sectoral index

Industry Titans Share Their AI Vision, Also Warn Of Pitfalls

Ambani announces $110bn push for AI sovereign infra

Supriya.Roy@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Reliance Industries chairman and managing director Mukesh Ambani on Thursday said his conglomerate has lined up investments of ₹10 billion (Rs 10 lakh crore) to build India's sovereign artificial intelligence infrastructure.

At a scale befitting India's ambition, the oil-to-telecom conglomerate plans to invest the mega-sum over seven years to build India's sovereign artificial intelligence infrastructure, including data centres and a nationwide edge compute network, Ambani said.

Data centres, the backbone of artificial intelligence, house the high-performance chips and servers required to train and run large AI models, a process that demands enormous computing power. They also consume a lot of electricity.

Reliance Industries and Jio would "connect India to the intelligence era" after having connected it to affordable broadband, Ambani said. "This is patient, disciplined nation-building capital," he said, adding that India "cannot afford to rent intelligence" and must reduce the cost of compute as dramatically as it reduced the cost of data.

Last month, Ambani had announced large investments in data centres in Gujarat. On Thursday, he said construction has begun on multi-gigawatt AI-ready data centres in Jamnagar, with over 120 megawatts expected to come online in the second half of 2026. The facilities will be backed by up to 10 gigawatts of green energy capacity in Kutch and Andhra Pradesh. A nationwide edge layer integrated with Jio's telecom network will bring low-latency AI services closer to users, from kirana stores to farms and clinics.

The data centres business in India is expected to fire up with the Union Budget 2026-27 introducing a tax holiday until 2047 for foreign cloud service providers using Indian data centres for global operations. "India will emerge as one of the greatest AI powers in the world in the 21st century," Ambani said.

He further outlined five principles guiding what he called "Jio Intelligence," multilingual AI across Indian languages, data residency and security, productivity-led use cases, job creation through high-skill work, and ecosystem partnerships with enterprises, startups, IITs and research institutions. AI must be driven by "social relevance, not momentary craze," he said, calling for global cooperation in areas such as chips and critical minerals, warning against hoarding and polarisation.

"For the first time, humans are creating human-like systems that can learn, speak, analyse, move and produce autonomously. AI is the Mantra that powers every Yantra or every machine and system. To work faster, better and smarter. I see AI as a modern-day Akshay Patra, the legendary vessel in Mahabharata that provided endless nourishment to all," he said.

'DRIVEN BY SOCIAL RELEVANCE'

> This is patient, disciplined nation-building capital. India cannot afford to rent intelligence and must reduce the cost of compute as dramatically as it reduced the cost of data. AI must be driven by social relevance, not momentary craze
> —Mukesh Ambani | RIL CHAIRMAN

- Reliance plans to invest the mega-sum over seven years
- It will build India's sovereign AI infrastructure, including data centres and a nationwide edge compute network
- Construction has begun on multi-gigawatt AI-ready data centres in Jamnagar, with over 120 megawatts expected to come online in the second half of 2026

Wall Street stalls as turmoil spurs oil rally

Heightened geopolitical worries sent stocks lower while extending a surge in oil and keeping a lid on bonds amid perceived inflation risks.

Gold topped $5,000, while selling shook alternative asset managers after a private credit fund halted redemptions. As a sense of caution prevailed, the S&P 500 halted its rebound from a tech-fuelled rout. A gauge of chipmakers slipped almost 1%. WTI crude rose above $66. Treasuries wavered. The dollar advanced against most major currencies.

"Crude oil prices are rising on the anticipation of possible military action in Iran," said Louis Navellier at Navellier & Associates. "The US and Iran are expected to meet again, and those negotiations are expected to be closely watched." Also sapping risk appetite was news that Blue Owl Capital will restrict withdrawals from one of its retail-focused private credit funds, reversing a previous plan to resume redemptions this quarter. Its shares tumbled 9%, dragging down industry peers like Apollo Global Management, Ares Management and TPG.

Almost 360 shares in the S&P 500 fell, with the gauge hovering near 6,861. BLOOMBERG

Edu advances hold up well despite visa, AI headwinds

Mayur Shetty
@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Education lending in India is proving unexpectedly resilient. Growth remains at risk and asset quality has improved even as visa curbs for Indian students in some countries and labour-market uncertainty from artificial intelligence cloud employment prospects abroad.

Data from Reserve Bank of India show education loans rising 14.8% year-on-year, with banks' outstanding exposure reaching Rs 1.5 lakh crore. Non-performing assets in the segment have fallen sharply, from 7% of loans in FY21 to about 2% in FY25, despite most large loans in this segment being unsecured.

Private lenders echo the trend. According to Amit Gainda, MD and CEO of Auxano Financial Services, the company has a loan book of close to Rs 25,000 crore and accounts for nearly 10% of the country's education loan assets, which he expects to grow at 20-25%, driven chiefly by demand for overseas study. Asset quality, he argues, compares favourably with most retail portfolios.

"At Avanse Financial Services, our gross stage-3 assets (bad loans) account for just 0.36% of the book; on a net basis, it is 0.06%. Financing penetration of education spend, once below 10%, now approaches 20%.

"Part of the reason for this is improved collection mechanisms that enable borrowers abroad to access and service their accounts easily, along with underwriting capabilities lenders have built across educational institutions."

14.8% RISE Y-O-Y

- RBI data shows education loans rising 14.8% year-on-year
- Banks' outstanding exposure has reached ₹1.5 lakh crore
- Demand linked to the US has softened
- Emerging choices include Ireland, France, New Zealand, the UAE, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Finland, Norway and Denmark

Sensex sinks 1.2k pts on US-Iran tensions

Fed Rate Cut Uncertainty, Weak Re Pull Index Down 1.5% To 82,498 Pts | MCap Down ₹7L Cr

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Across-the-board selling on Dalal Street pulled the sensex down by 1,226 points (1.5%) to close at 82,498 points after the US Fed minutes showed the next rate cut is not as sure as it was expected to be till now, and the escalating geopolitical tensions. All the 30 sensex constituents closed in the red and investors lost nearly Rs 7 lakh crore.

The day's session started on a relatively strong note with the sensex up about 250 points on the day, but as the session progressed the index slid to close near the day's low at 82,361 points. On the NSE, nifty fell 365 points (1.4%) to close at 25,454 points.

According to Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments, the markets slid on Thursday due to rising geopolitical tensions between the US and Iran, leading to a broad-based sell-off. "Brent crude surged to its year-to-date high, exacerbating inflationary concerns and triggering heightened market volatility on fear of bottleneck of the Strait of Hormuz. At the same time uncertainty surrounding the US Fed's rate-cut trajectory and continued weakness of the rupee impacted the domestic market," Nair said.

Among the sensex stocks, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank contributed the most to the index's four-digit loss for the day. The day's session also left investors poorer by Rs 6.8 lakh crore with BSE's market capitalisation now at Rs 465.3 lakh crore, official data showed.

On Thursday, selling by foreign funds was comparatively muted with the net selling figure at Rs 880 crore, BSE data showed. Interestingly, domestic funds were also net sellers with the figure at Rs 396 crore. Usually institutional trading data in the recent months have shown that the days foreign funds sell, domestic funds turn net buyers.

During the day's sell-off, among the sectors, real estate, power and auto were sold the most, while healthcare and hospital stocks were the least affected, BSE data showed. At closed of trading on BSE, there were 3,011 stocks that closed with losses compared to 1,210 that closed with gains.

Among Worst-Performing Mkts This Year

Tata Group ties up with OpenAI

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Tata Group and OpenAI entered into a strategic partnership, placing a significant bet on India's AI infrastructure playbook. In the first phase, TCS will build AI infrastructure with 1000MW capacity, scalable up to 1GW.

The platform is intended to support next-generation AI training and inference workloads while advancing India's ambition to become a global AI hub.

As part of the global Stargate initiative, OpenAI and Tata Group will develop local, AI-ready data centre capacity focused on data residency, security, and long-term domestic capability.

"The infrastructure is designed as a purpose-built AI compute optimised for training and inference workloads," said N Chandrasekaran, chairman of Tata Sons, at the India AI Impact Summit here on Thursday. He described the partnership as a unique opportunity for OpenAI and TCS to transform industries.

OpenAI will become the first customer of TCS' HyperVault data centre business. Recently, TCS secured $1 billion from private equity firm TPG to advance its AI data centre strategy in India, aligning with its goal of becoming the largest AI-led technology services firm.

OpenAI chief executive officer Sam Altman said, "India is already leading the way in AI adoption, and with its talent, ambition, and strong govt support, it is well placed to help shape its future. Through OpenAI for India and our partnership with Tata Group, we're working together to build the infrastructure, skills, and local partnerships needed to build AI with India, for India, and in India, so that more people across the country can access and benefit from it."

AI biggest opportunity for IT cos: Chandra

Bengaluru: Even as AI signals a paradigm shift for IT, Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran called it the sector's biggest opportunity. "Since I come from the IT industry, let me say one word about IT. In my opinion, this is the biggest opportunity for the technology sector and the IT industry..." he said at the India AI Impact Summit on Thursday.. He emphasized that the true value of IT lies in its deep contextual understanding of enterprise business and technology landscapes — and in its ability to make the right technology work within complex processes, ecosystems, supplier networks, customer relationships and enterprise stacks. TNN

'AI moment mirrors India's '08 net arrival'

New Delhi: India's artificial intelligence moment today resembles the internet's arrival in 2008, when scale was limited but trajectory was undeniable, Bejul Somaia, MD at Lightspeed Venture Partners, said at the India AI Impact Summit.

"If you had known with certainty that the Internet was coming to India — not if, but when — what would you have done differently?" Somaia asked founders, arguing that AI's arrival is now a question of "how and how fast." He said what matters in technology cycles is not current scale but momentum. "Scale is a snapshot, but the slope is the story," he said. Somaia highlighted healthcare and education as transformation frontiers, where AI could make specialist intelligence accessible beyond geography and income barriers.

'White-collar resentment can derail AI momentum'

Vaitheeswaran.S
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Infosys chairman **Nandan Nilekani** warned that resentment among white-collar workers could hinder progress in artificial intelligence unless the transition is managed carefully. He also stressed the need to build use cases that benefit larger sections of the population, while supporting career transitions and reskilling.

Speaking at a fireside chat with Dario Amodei, co-founder of Anthropic, he said, "Resentment of blue-collar workers led to the train wreck of globalisation, and resentment of white-collar workers would lead to the train wreck of AI."

Discussing AI adoption and its negative effects, such as the rise of deepfakes and higher utility costs, he urged efforts to build and showcase meaningful use cases that improve ordinary lives — including raising farmers' incomes, improving education and healthcare outcomes, and expanding language access. "In AI, there is a race to the top and a race to the bottom; the latter is faster. We need to make sure AI diffusion is useful for humanity and accelerate efforts for diffusion, otherwise the consequences are difficult to manage," he said.

> Resentment of blue-collar workers led to the train wreck of globalisation, and resentment of white-collar workers could lead to the train wreck of AI.
> **Nandan Nilekani** | CHAIRMAN, INFOSYS

Nilekani argued that India should become the use-case capital for AI diffusion. "For AI to deliver value to larger society, not just individuals, we have to look at diffusion pathways starting from the user. How can we take a billion people and help them learn better, give them better healthcare, and improve the earnings of half a billion farmers, and then figure out how to make it happen? I think India will lead on that," he said. He added that achieving this would require policymaking, trust-building, and negotiation. "Technology is just one piece of the puzzle. It is about institutions, trust-building, negotiations, and guardrails. We need to work with different stakeholders and move towards a common vision. Diffusion is difficult — it is not a single task," he said.

RBI's new rules will dry up mkt liquidity: ANMI to Sebi

Partha.Sinha@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: ANMI, one of the biggest trade bodies of stock brokers in India, has warned that RBI's move to put in stricter rules for banks to fund some of the broking activities could lead to lower tax revenue for the govt and dry up liquidity on the bourses.

The brokers' body has written to markets regulator Sebi that the implementation of the RBI circular should be delayed by at least six months "to allow market participants to submit feedback and impact assessments and engage in constructive consultation".

One rule stipulates that funding of brokers must be fully backed by collaterals

The move by RBI, effective April 1, will require stricter risk compliance and bigger collateral, in effect give less borrowing width to brokers, increase costs of trading and dry up liquidity on the bourses, market players said.

Among several of the changes that RBI has made, aimed at reducing market-related risks for brokers, one stipulates that funding of brokers must be fully backed by collateral, unlike the present practice where part of the loan could be unsecured.

It also says that in case there's a bank guarantee to an exchange, at least 50% of that must be backed by collaterals while 25% of that should be cash. In case lenders provide stocks as collateral, this banks should not give more than 80% of the value of the stocks as loans.

The RBI has also banned banks from funding proprietary trading by brokers. The new rules also said that all loans to brokers by banks should be part of the lender's overall limits on market lending.

Sarvam model puts India on frontier AI map

Shilpa Phadnis &
Supriya Roy | TNN

New Delhi: In a significant push to strengthen India's advanced AI capabilities, homegrown startup Sarvam launched a 105-billion-parameter foundational large language model (LLM), along with a suite of tools designed for commercial use. Co-founder Vivek Raghavan discussed the company's progress in Indic languages and its expansion into AI-powered devices.

Sarvam's 105-billion-parameter AI model places it in the frontier category. Architecturally, what differentiates it from global models beyond just size?

This is the largest model trained from scratch in India, with zero external data dependency and a strong grounding in Indian knowledge. While it is a global model, it is built with Indian contexts in mind. Models like Gemini or ChatGPT are still an order of magnitude larger, so we are not claiming parity in scale. However, being smaller makes our models more efficient and cost effective. For most real-world and agentic use cases, models of this size deliver excellent results without requiring extreme scale

> This is the largest model trained from scratch in India... While it is a global model, it is built with Indian contexts in mind. Models like Gemini or ChatGPT are still an order of magnitude larger, so we are not claiming parity in scale. However, being smaller makes our models more efficient and cost effective. For most real-world and agentic use cases, models of this size deliver excellent results without requiring extreme scale
> Vivek Raghavan | CO-FOUNDER, SARVAM

How deeply is the model trained in Indic languages? Can it outperform global models in low-resource languages?

We are far more focused on Indian languages than most global labs. Among models of comparable size, we are superior in Indian languages. It is not fair to compare systems tens of times larger, but within our size category, we are stronger. What specific progress did you make in Indian languages? We believe Indians will experience AI primarily through voice. In speech recognition across Indian languages and dialects, we believe we are the best in the world. Our newer models are world-class in natural speech synthesis. We also released a small vision model that outperforms much larger systems at extracting Indic scripts from documents and images. Among similarly sized LLMs, we are equivalent or better than most. For instance, we outperformed a DeepSeek model released last year, and even compared favourably with a version 6 times larger. Our goal is to lead globally within our size class, especially in Indian language and domain-specific contexts.

Was the model trained entirely on domestic infrastructure? How will you make inference affordable at scale?

Yes, it was trained entirely in India under the India AI mission, using concessional GPUs and no external data dependency. Inference is a separate challenge. Training does not guarantee adoption. We will enable access to our models, but competing in pure B2C is difficult when global players offer free services after spending billions. That is a structural reality.

Inox, Authum set to buy Wind World assets

Rneha Zachariah
@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: A consortium of Inox Neo Energies and Authum Investment & Infrastructure is set to buy the assets of bankrupt Wind World for an estimated Rs 1,800-1,900 crore, after the committee of creditors approved its resolution plan . Under the plan, Inox Neo will acquire Wind World's 600 MW wind power portfolio, while its listed sister company, Inox Green Energy, will take over the entity's 4.5 GW operations and maintenance (O&M) business.

Inox Neo and Inox Green—part of the Inox GFL Group—are the lead members of the consortium. Authum, owned by Sanjay Dangi, is said to be primarily interested in Wind World's real estate assets, according to people familiar with the matter. Dangi had earlier acquired the NBFC business of Reliance. Wind World operates wind farms across seven states in India, and its O&M arm services clients including Tata, ReNew, Greenko and Apraava Energy. Commenting on the acquisition, Inox GFL executive director Devansh Jain said the deal would expand the group's O&M portfolio and strengthen its presence across the wind value chain.

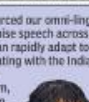
'Mfg of rare earth magnets to begin by Dec'

New Delhi: India is set to begin production of rare earth permanent magnets by the end of this year, minister of mines G Kishan Reddy said on Thursday calling it a "very big achievement" for the country's push towards self-reliance in critical minerals. Speaking at a FICCI event, Reddy said the govt, along with Nonferrous Materials Technology Centre (NFTDC), developed indigenous technology for rare earth magnets and is now giving it to the private sector. "Equipment is almost established and production should happen by the end of this year...the work is progressing from this perspective," he said. TNN

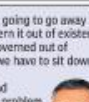
AGI IMPACT TO BE 10 TIMES THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

"Frugal innovation is our secret sauce. I see so many good friends here from India who did well in the US. I think it is because we use Jugaad. That is how I think we all succeeded on the global stage"
—SHANTANU NARAYEN | Adobe CEO

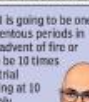
"We recently open-sourced our omni-lingual models, which recognise speech across more than 1,600 languages and can rapidly adapt to new languages. We are collaborating with the Indian govt on language inclusion in AI. Through the AI kosh platform, we are providing data sets in 10 major Indian languages so people can build AI models that deeply understand Indian languages and contexts"
—ALEXANDER WANG | CHIEF AI OFFICER, META



"AI is not going to go away if you govern it out of existence. It cannot be governed out of existence. So we have to sit down and solve the governance and accountability problem before it's too late. If we don't, we will erode trust in AI"
—NIKESH ARORA | CEO, PALO ALTO NETWORKS



"The advent of AGI is going to be one of the most momentous periods in human history, like the advent of fire or electricity. It is going to be 10 times the impact of the Industrial Revolution, but happening at 10 times the speed, probably unfolding in a matter of a decade rather than a century"
—DEMIS HASSABIS | CO-FOUNDER AND CEO OF GOOGLE DEEPMIND



As Indian Trio Showcases AI Prowess In Linguistics, Global Leaders Bet Big On Country's Large Talent Pool & Adoption

Qualcomm to make modules in India

Will Expand Biz To Start Advanced Packaging, Assembly Of Semiconductors

Siddhartha@timesofindia.com

INDIA IN FOCUS Pratik Paul Bhattacharjee

Qualcomm plans to invest $150 million in Indian startups through a new venture capital fund

It has unveiled its first 2-nanometer chip that is entirely designed by the team in India

"We will leverage investments in India for semiconductor manufacturing as capacity becomes available, and we will begin engagement for fabrication. Once that is done, these products will be part of the line-up sold to customers worldwide."
—CRISTIANO AMON | QUALCOMM PRESIDENT & CEO

It will also manufacture "certain integrated modules", mainly for automotive and other segments, which require higher levels of integration

India is an R&D hub for the company, the second largest after the US

New Delhi: Ramping up its India focus, US semiconductor and wireless technology company Qualcomm is all set to announce a partnership to manufacture and source automotive modules from the country.

"We are expanding our relationship with India also for the beginning of advanced packaging and assembly and testing of semiconductors. And, we also want to announce a partnership to start leveraging some of the investment in foundry," Qualcomm president & CEO Cristiano Amon said. The plan, whose details are likely to be unveiled Friday, came hours after PM Narendra Modi nudged global companies to "design and develop in India" for the global market. "Tomorrow (Friday), we will be making announcements about manufacturing some of the modules we provide to global companies in India, with new electronics manufacturing partners. We're also expanding our engagement in advanced packaging, assembly and testing as part of India's growing semiconductor supply chain," Amon said.

India is an R&D hub for the American company, the second largest after the US. It announced the first 2-nanometer chip to be entirely designed by the team in India. Amon said that the company now wants to leverage that capability in India, which has got a boost due to govt's efforts to create the manufacturing ecosystem for electronics. "It is the beginning of a semiconductor supply chain. That's a significant expansion because they will not only have design capabilities in the country, but also the ability to manufacture. At the end of the day, we all know chips are important. Chips go into everything. The world needs a more diversified and more semiconductor manufacturing capacity." Asked if the plan will be confined to India or will also cater to the global supply chain, Amon said the company is starting with design of some of its integrated chips, especially for power management. "We will leverage investments in India for semiconductor manufacturing as capacity becomes available, and we will begin engagement for fabrication. Once that is done, these products will be part of the Qualcomm product line-up sold to customers worldwide."

He said that the company will also manufacture "certain integrated modules", especially for automotive and other segments, which require higher levels of integration. The Qualcomm boss also said that govt should move on the path that it has taken to boost electronic manufacturing, digital governance and sovereign AI. "These things, by definition, are multi-year commitments. It's really important that the enthusiasm that exists right now continues. It's a multi-year journey. But, at the end of the day, I think when it's all done everybody will look back and say that it was the right decision."

Cos see AI as a growth engine: Accenture CEO

Fair Amount Of Uncertainty Around Tech, Adoption Is Biggest Barrier: Julie Sweet

Shilpa Phadnis & Sujit John | TNN

New Delhi: Julie Sweet is CEO of Accenture, the world's largest IT consulting and services company, with revenue of $70 billion. After a 10-year legal career, Sweet joined Accenture as general counsel in 2000 and was appointed CEO in 2019. In her first interaction with the media in India, where Accenture employs 3.5 lakh people, Sweet spoke about AI's transformational capabilities, how LLMs are becoming the new malls, and AI's impact on talent.

Companies building AI tech are making big investments. How is business adoption of AI?

Demand is significant and shifting. Our latest quarterly survey of C-suites across 30 countries found that the biggest value for AI is driving growth. This is a shift from the discussion about productivity and efficiency. For clients, it is the old maxim: You cannot cut your way to growth, and the bigger opportunity is to drive growth. For example, LLMs are going to become a new mall. This is an entirely new channel and very different from what it was in search of. All the main model providers and big tech ecosystems are creating the technology now (to buy on LLMs). To show up in these models and engage a customer, businesses must make different kinds of content and enable the ability to buy. That is like making the impossible possible last several years; we have the largest AI workforce and experience of any of our peers in terms of actual execution. So, we are focused on this big opportunity.

"LLMs are going to become a new mall. This is an entirely new channel and very different from what it was in search of. All the main model providers and big tech ecosystems are creating the technology now (to buy on LLMs). To show up in these models and engage a customer, businesses must make different kinds of content and enable the ability to buy. That is like making the impossible possible"

"We will hire more people this year than last. At the same time, how we onboard and train talent is changing dramatically. Graduates today arrive far more AI-native than those who entered the workforce 5 years ago"
—JULIE SWEET | CEO, ACCENTURE

As AI becomes more autonomous, who is accountable — the board, the CEO, or the developer?

Human remain in the lead. Governance does not change because technology evolves. Companies have boards and CEOs who are responsible for everything that happens. Leaders managed more technology today than a decade ago, yet accountability has not shifted. But responsibility ultimately rests with the board and CEO.

Accenture is stopping AI-specific revenue disclosures. How should investors track progress?

When ChatGPT surged, there was uncertainty about its business impact. In 2023, we reported $100 million in advanced AI sales to demonstrate leadership and transparency—rapid growth, but from a small base. None of our peers broke out pure advanced AI revenues the way we did. At that time, most of the work was proof-of-concept, so it was easy to isolate. We reported only advanced AI, not the classical AI we delivered for years. Now it is integrated into large transformations, making separation less meaningful. That reflects market maturity. Ultimately, investors judge us on top-line growth and bottom-line results. AI's value lies in driving enterprise-wide impact, not slotting in a silo.

Close to half of your 7.8 lakh employees are in India. Give us a sense of the role your India employees are playing.

In India, we will hire more people this year than last. At the same time, how we onboard and train talent is changing dramatically. Graduates today arrive far more AI-native than those who entered the workforce 5 years ago. Entry-level employees are critical because they bring new ways of working and thinking. Everyone at Accenture is being trained in agentic AI, and India has one of the largest AI workforces in the world, tightly integrated with our hubs in the US, Europe, and Japan. India is not just a delivery centre — it is central to our AI capability build-out.

What is your advice for youngsters and universities, given how AI is changing job roles?

You have to walk in with AI fluency. That was not true 3 years ago. So, it is absolutely critical that universities work with the private sector to truly understand the skills employers need now and make sure that their youth have those skills.

Beyond big models: 3 cos show India's push in linguistic AI gain

Akhil.George@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: At the India AI Summit, a trio of domestic model launches signalled that India is no longer merely trying to keep pace in the global AI arms race, but to redefine what winning looks like.

Rather than chasing ever-larger parameter counts, companies such as Bharat-Gen, Sarvam AI and Gnani.ai are positioning their latest systems as solutions to a problem frontier models have yet to convincingly solve: Linguistic and cultural depth in India.

Sarvam AI unveiled a 105-billion-parameter model tuned for Indic reasoning and translation, arguing that global systems often falter when faced with code-mixed text or nuanced local references. The company claims its model can even outperform global tech giants in optical character recognition (OCR) and multilingual speech in Indian languages, citing benchmark scores to back the claim. BharatGen introduced a 17-billion-parameter multilingual Mixture-of-Experts model trained across Indian languages and designed for critical use cases spanning governance, education, healthcare, agriculture and enterprise solutions. Meanwhile, Gnani.ai launched a five-billion-parameter voice-to-voice model built to handle heavy accents, background noise and Hindi-English blends common in everyday Indian speech. The company says it delivers this performance with greater efficiency than larger global models.

By contrast, leading systems from OpenAI and Google dominate international benchmarks and parameter counts, but are primarily trained on globally aggregated datasets in which English and Mandarin outweigh most low-resource languages. The result, Indian developers argue, is strong general reasoning paired with uneven contextual fluency on the ground.

PM speech gets real-time sign language, 11-version AI dubbing

PM Narendra Modi's keynote speech on Thursday became a showcase for inclusive AI. An AI-enabled system rendered his speech into sign language in real time, displayed on a large screen to make the address accessible to deaf and hard-of-hearing attendees. Simultaneously, artificial intelligence dubbed the speech live into 11 languages — Assamese, Bangla, English, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil and Telugu — breaking linguistic barriers across India's diverse audiences. The innovations underscored how AI can enhance communication and accessibility at major public events. TNN

Chennai-based startup to build India's 1st e-air taxi

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Chennai-based startup The ePlane Company is building India's first electric air taxi, the e200i, using advanced technology from Nvidia. Engineers have created a highly detailed "digital twin" of the aircraft using Nvidia Omniverse software, allowing them to test flight physics, sensors and emergency scenarios in a virtual world before the real aircraft takes off.

The company will also use Nvidia's computing platform onboard the aircraft to process data from cameras and radars. Officials say the air taxi will make safe, real-time decisions. By flying millions of virtual kilometres first, ePlane aims to make urban air travel safer and more reliable.

The collaboration also opens a new frontier for India's aviation sector. The computational intensity of these simulations requires high-performance computing (HPC) infrastructure, leveraging advanced GPUs to render physics in real time. This digital twin can also function as a predictive analytics engine, mirroring the configuration of actual aircraft components to anticipate maintenance needs well before a failure occurs.

"This isn't just a simulation; it's a time machine for safety. Our aircraft live a thousand lives in the digital testbed, where algorithms can master the unknown, test the most remote scenarios, and improve exponentially. This will accelerate the pace of innovation and help us build more with less. Every decision is validated and perfected in the digital world so that safety is uncompromising in the physical one," said Bakthakrishnan Shyamsundar, principal engineer – Avionics Systems & Autonomy at The ePlane Company

Back open-source AI to guard digital autonomy: Mistral CEO

Vaitheeswaran.B
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Warning about concentration risk from a few companies dominating AI, Arthur Mensch, co-founder and CEO of Mistral, said India should support open-source models and collaborate with global startup labs and researchers to maintain strategic autonomy and ensure the country benefits from AI-driven productivity and economic growth.

Speaking at the India AI Impact Summit on Thursday, he said, "AI will contribute significant double-digit growth to GDP in the coming years. It is critical that everyone has access to the on and off switch to ensure business continuity and that countries are not dependent on external providers who can effectively shut off access. The global AI landscape is rapidly evolving and is highly focused on control, surveillance and leverage. Countries need a future grounded in openness, trust, and autonomy. It is a fundamental right for countries to own their AI destiny. This is crucial for preserving digital autonomy and shaping our own future."

He also argued that the leverage of larger players must be curbed, noting that India's market size gives it the power to build a different pathway for AI progress.

Mensch, a key figure in the French AI startup ecosystem and one of the few competing in large language model development, said new not dependent on external providers who can effectively shut off access. The global AI landscape is rapidly evolving and is highly focused on control, surveillance and leverage. Countries need a future grounded in openness, trust, and autonomy. It is a fundamental right for countries to own their AI destiny. This is crucial for preserving digital autonomy and shaping our own future."

"AI will contribute significant double-digit growth to GDP in coming years. It is critical that everyone has access to the on and off switch to ensure business continuity and that countries are not dependent on external providers who can effectively shut off access"
—ARTHUR MENSCH | CO-FOUNDER & CEO, MISTRAL

He also argued that the leverage of larger players must be curbed, noting that India's market size gives it the power to build a different pathway for AI progress.

Mensch, a key figure in the French AI startup ecosystem and one of the few competing in large language model development, said open source is not a radical idea, pointing out that it underpinned the internet and cloud computing. As of Sept last year, the French AI startup was valued at nearly $14 billion. "Today we are facing a dichotomy between open sources, where a few companies like Mistral compete, and models developed by large private corporations that are using them as leverage."

He called for collaborations to build better open-source AI, especially for low-resource languages, with a special focus on India's 22 official languages. "Our key goal is to ensure that more languages are properly represented in these models. To do this, Mistral works with local ecosystems and labs that can help acquire and curate high-quality text and speech data in these languages. The idea is that by feeding this diverse content into open-source models, they become more accurate and useful for local populations, not just English-speaking users."

Entering a world that automates, automates: NXP

Akhil.George
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Imagine a world where your home unlocks as you approach, adjusts the temperature before you feel the chill, quietly monitors your health, and safeguards your property without a single visible barrier. Your car becomes a rolling living room, steering, braking, and navigating hazards long before they enter your line of sight. In factories, humans no longer wrestle with machines but supervise fleets of intelligent systems. This, said Lars Reger, global chief technology officer at NXP Semiconductors, is the next phase of technological evolution: "A world that anticipates and automates."

Over the next decade, Reger predicts that tens of billions of smart, connected robots will be embedded in homes, cars, hospitals and infrastructure. However different their form factors, they will share four essential capabilities: Sensing, thinking, connecting, and acting. Devices will perceive their environment, draw on cloud intelligence, make decisions, and execute them physically. Yet none of this matters, he warned, if users cannot trust the device. Trust means functional safety and cybersecurity — braking systems that never fail, thermostats that do not overheat homes, and cars that cannot be hacked.

Autonomous systems have faltered before because, in his view, they were designed incorrectly. The solution, he argued, is to take inspiration from biology. The human body separates fast, deterministic reflexes from higher cognition. Not every decision requires a vast AI brain. "How big does the AI really have to be?" he asked, noting that an ant's 100,000 neurons can create an efficient transportation system.

The future, according to Reger, lies at the edge. Ultra-low-power chips, AI accelerators consuming as little as seven watts, radar that can see through fog and car-to-car communication that functions almost like telepathy. Data centres will remain important, but the real democratisation of AI, he insisted, "lies at the famous edge in the end device" — in billions of quiet, trusted machines that anticipate our needs before we voice them.

'India likely to see one of world's largest AI user bases'

New Delhi: AI must remain open, trusted, and globally accessible rather than concentrated in a few hands, industry leaders said at the India AI Impact Summit, highlighting India's potential role in shaping global AI norms.

Sunil Mittal, founder and chairman of Bharti Enterprises, said AI is already becoming central to telecom operations. "From our company's standpoint, AI is becoming a really integral part of how we operate, serve customers, and build our networks," he said, adding that sectors such as healthcare, education, and medical sciences "will flourish on the back of this."

Shantanu Narayen, chairman and CEO of Adobe, said India is likely to see one of the world's largest AI user bases. "Given that the number of people using AI in India will be greater than anywhere else in the world in a few years, the leadership role India can play — not just in what these models mean, but in how we think about data, privacy, security, and trust — is significant," he said.

A key concern, Narayen added, is authenticity in the age of generative AI. "I want every piece of information that's produced to carry provenance and a watermark so that people can clearly distinguish what is real from what is fake," he said. TNN

'Secure chatbots or your wife may know your secrets'

Akhil.George@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: What if your spouse discovers your deepest secrets by scrolling through your chatbot conversations? Nikesh Arora, CEO of cybersecurity giant Palo Alto Networks, says companies like his are racing to address emerging risks in an increasingly AI-reliant world.

"My fear is that in about six months, if I'm talking to my AI model, it might know more things about me than I've told my wife," he told the audience at the India AI Impact Summit in New Delhi on Thursday. "I don't want my wife to get her hands on my Gemini prompts because I'm surprised what it might tell her."

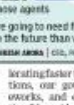
The remark drew laughs but underscored a serious concern: AI systems are fast becoming therapists, nutritionists, financial advisers and confidants. Users are sharing intimate details with machines that promise convenience and insight. As Arora noted, if that data "falls into the wrong hands, it's not a good idea."

The broader danger, he argued, is structural. "AI is accelerating faster than our institutions, our governance frameworks, and even our intuition. At present, the balance is tilted... not in the favour of trust, inclusion, security; it's actually tilted in the favour of speed." All things new models and capabilities every week, often released before guardrails are fully formed.

"AI is accelerating faster than our institutions, our governance frameworks, and even our intuition. At present, the balance is tilted... not in the favour of trust, inclusion, security; it's actually tilted in the favour of speed."

"As soon as you give control to an agent, you have to worry about who's responsible for the actions of those agents"

"I have a conviction that we're going to need five times the number of technology people in the future than we have today"
—NIKESH ARORA | CEO, PALO ALTO NETWORKS



As the world moves toward an "agentic" future — where AI systems can act autonomously — the risks multiply. "As soon as you give control to an agent, you have to worry about who's responsible for the actions of those agents," he said. If an AI mismanages your investments or transfers money without consent, accountability becomes blurred. The same applies to physical systems: How do you ensure that a robot designed to assist at home cannot be manipulated?

Arora was blunt about the limits of prohibition. "AI is not going to go away if you govern it out of existence. It cannot be governed out of existence," he said. The answer, instead, lies in embedding governance and accountability into the technology itself. For cybersecurity firms, that means building protection from the outset. AI must be "secure, governed and controlled" — not patched after damage is done. That includes safeguarding vast datasets, monitoring AI-generated code that could be malicious or flawed, and preparing for adversarial AI systems designed to exploit vulnerabilities.

Yet Arora clarified that he remains optimistic — not only that we will navigate this new terrain, but that it will create new opportunities. "I have a conviction that we're going to need five times the number of technology people in the future than we have today," he said, arguing that security, governance and oversight will generate new roles rather than eliminate them.

TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2026

OSCAR-WINNER MICHELLE YEOH GETS HOLLYWOOD WALK OF FAME STAR, DEDICATES IT TO PARENTS: 'THIS IS OUR STAR'

BONO LAMBASTS ICE, PUTIN, NETANYAHU AS IRISH BAND U2 RELEASES FIRST COLLECTION OF NEW MUSIC SINCE 2017

Diplomacy Or War? What Will Trump Pick?

US Forces In W Asia Ready For Action As Soon As This Weekend: Officials

Washington: A massive US military buildup in West Asia has fuelled fears of a wider war in the region. The buildup has progressed to the point that President Donald Trump has the option to take military action against Iran as soon as this weekend, administration and Pentagon officials said, leaving the White House with high stakes choices about pursuing diplomacy or war.

The drive to assemble a military force capable of striking Iran's nuclear programme, its ballistic missiles and accompanying launch sites has continued this week despite indirect talks between the two nations on Tuesday, with Iran seeking two weeks to come back with fleshed out proposals for a diplomatic resolution.

Iranian and US negotiators met on Tuesday and Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araqchi said they had agreed on "guiding principles". White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said on Wednesday, however, that the two sides remained apart on some issues. A senior US official said Iran would make a written proposal on how to address US concerns.

Trump called on Tehran to join the US on the "path to peace". "They can't have a nuclear weapon, it's very simple," he said. "You can't have peace in the Middle East (West Asia) if they have a nuclear weapon."

Trump has repeatedly demanded that Iran give up its nuclear programme, including agreeing not to enrich any more uranium. PM Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, whose country would potentially take part in an attack, has been pushing for action to weaken Iran's ability to launch missiles at Israel. Israeli forces, which have been on heightened alert for weeks, have been making more preparations for a possible war.

Iran has resisted making major concessions on its nuclear programme, though insisting it is for peaceful purposes.

The US buildup responds an array of possible Iranian targets, including short and medium range missiles, missile storage depots, nuclear sites and other targets, such as Iran's Revolutionary Guard HQ.

Despite Trump's tough stance, the Pentagon last month was in a poor position to back him up. The 30,000 to 40,000 US troops scattered around West Asia, including at eight permanent bases, were low on air defences to protect them from expected retaliation. But over the past month, the US military has moved the necessary air defences — including Patriot missile defence and Terminal High Altitude Area Defence systems. Both systems can intercept Iranian ballistic missiles. Another said the US military could now defend itself from any Iranian retaliation for American strikes on its nuclear and military targets, at least for a short campaign. But, the official said, the question remains as to whether the US military is ready to sustain a longer and wider war. AGENCIES

'US Armada' includes Tomahawk missiles, F-35, F/A-18 attack planes

In recent weeks, the US military has built up forces close to Iran, in what President Trump has referred to as an "armada." The armada includes the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln, which is accompanied by three warships that are equipped with Tomahawk missiles and that were used to strike two of Iran's nuclear facilities last June. The warships also carry air defences. The carrier's stealthy F-35 fighters and F/A-18 attack planes are well within striking distance of dozens of targets in Iran.

The US recently ordered a second aircraft carrier strike group to the region. This includes the navy's most advanced aircraft carrier, the USS Gerald R Ford, and three of its accompanying destroyers. On Wednesday, they were en route se to Strait of Gibraltar, according to flight and ship-tracking data reviewed by NYT.

Additionally, another destroyer was sent to the Northern Arabian Sea, and one is en route, according to an official, bringing the total in the wider region to 5 destroyers. The Muwaffaq Salti Air Base in Jordan appears to have become a central node for the US assets of the buildup. At least two wings of attack aircraft arrived between mid-Jan and mid-Feb, bringing the number to nearly 80.

In addition to the attack aircraft, four electronic warfare jets, which are used to jam radar and communications systems, arrived in Jordan at the end of Jan. And a Jan 30 satellite image showed at least five MQ-9 Reaper drones at the base.

And the Pentagon has dispatched more Patriot and THAAD air defenses to help protect troops there from Iranian missiles. There are 30,000 to 40,000 US troops in the region. NYT

Iran holds more drills with Russia

Dubai: Iran held annual military drills with Russia on Thursday as a second American aircraft carrier drew closer to West Asia, with both the US and Iran signalling they are prepared for war if talks on Tehran's nuclear programme fizzle out. Indirect talks held in recent weeks made little visible progress, and one or both sides could be buying time for final war preparations.

Iranian forces and Russian sailors conducted the annual drills in the Gulf of Oman and the Indian Ocean aimed at "upgrading operational coordination as well as exchange of military experiences." Iran's state-run IRNA news agency reported Iran also issued a rocket-fire warning to pilots in the region, suggesting launch of anti-ship missiles.

Separately, Iran's atomic energy chief Mohammad Eslami said Thursday his country can deprive Iran of the right" to nuclear enrichment. AGENCIES

At first meeting of Board of Peace, US prez claims $7 billion raised for Gaza

Washington: US President Donald Trump told the first meeting of his Board of Peace on Thursday that nations had contributed $7 billion to a Gaza reconstruction fund that aims to rebuild the enclave once Hamas disarms. The dismantlement of Hamas militants and accompanying withdrawal of Israeli troops, the size of the reconstruction fund and the flow of humanitarian aid to the war-battered population of Gaza are among the major questions likely to test the effectiveness of the board in the months ahead.

In a flurry of announcements at the end of a long, winding speech to representatives from 47 nations, Trump said the US will contribute $10 billion to the Board of Peace. He said contributing nations had raised $7 billion as an initial down payment for Gaza reconstruction. Nations contributing included Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, the UAE, Morocco, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, and Kuwait, he said.

Trump proposed the board in Sept when he announced his plan to end Israel's war in Gaza. He later made clear the board's remit would expand beyond Gaza to tackle other conflicts worldwide. Trump said FIFA will raise $75 million for soccer-related projects in Gaza and that the UN will chip in $1 billion for humanitarian assistance. Trump said Norway would host a Board of Peace event, but Norway clarified it was not joining the board.

The Board of Peace includes Israel but not Palestinian representatives. Trump's suggestion that the Board could address challenges beyond Gaza has stirred anxiety that it could undermine UN's role in conflict resolution. AGENCIES

President Trump at the inaugural meet of 'Board of Peace' Thursday

Board will be 'looking over' UN, says Trump

The US will strengthen the UN, make it viable and help it "money-wise", President Trump said Thursday, as he asserted that his Board of Peace will be "looking over" the global organisation, making sure it runs properly. "We're going to bring them back, I think the UN has great potential. It has not lived up to potential," Trump said, adding that for the eight wars he "settled", he "never" spoke to the UN about even one of them when in fact he should have spoken about all of them with the global body. PTI

Trump withdraws support for UK's deal to hand over Chagos Islands to Mauritius

Naomi Canton

London: US President Donald Trump has, in a U-turn, withdrawn US support for UK PM **Keir Starmer**'s deal to hand the Chagos Islands over to Mauritius, calling it a "big mistake" and saying the claims made on the island "are fictitious".

In a post Wednesday, Trump called the 56-year lease Starmer has negotiated for the largest island, Diego Garcia, which hosts a joint UK-US military base, in exchange for handing over sovereignty of the entire archipelago to Mauritius "because it is best". He wrote: "This land should not be taken away from our ally" and said the US may use the military base in the event of a war with Iran. He wrote that UK "have to remain strong in the face of Wokeism…DO NOT GIVE AWAY DIEGO GARCIA!"

Trump's attack on Starmer was a sharp reversal from two weeks ago and in direct contrast to a statement made on Tuesday by the US state department which said it "supports the decision of the UK to proceed with its agreement with Mauritius concerning the Chagos archipelago".

It comes as four Chagossians landed on the archipelago in a rubber dinghy on Monday saying they plan to settle there. They include govt-in-exile first minister Misley Mandarin and his father Michel Mandarin (74), who was born on the island and removed from it when he was 16 and sent to Mauritius.

Chagossians were removed by the UK between 1968 and 1973, at the request of the US, to make way for the military base, and displaced to Mauritius, Seychelles and the UK.

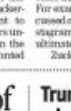
On Wednesday a British patrol boat arrived and officials served the men an eviction notice threatening prison or a £2,000 fine. The men vowed to stay and Misley said the UK authorities will have to "kill" him to remove him. REUTERS

TOI LINE OF NO CONTROL — SANDEEP ADHWARYU

At addiction trial, Zuckerberg denies that Instagram & Facebook target kids

Los Angeles: Meta Platforms CEO **Mark Zuckerberg** on Wednesday repeatedly said during a trial over youth social media addiction that the Facebook and Instagram operator does not allow children under 13 on its platforms, despite being confronted with evidence suggesting otherwise.

Mark Lanier, a lawyer for the woman suing Instagram and Google's YouTube for harming her mental health when she was a child, pressed Zuckerberg over his statement to Congress in 2024 that users under 13 were not allowed on the platform. Lanier confronted Zuckerberg with internal Meta documents. "If we want to win big with teens, we must bring them in as tweens," read an internal Instagram presentation from 2018. "And yet you say that we would never do that," said Lanier.



Zuckerberg replied that Lanier was "mischaracterising what I am saying." He said Meta has "had different conversations to try to build different versions of services that kids can safely use." For example, he said Meta discussed creating a version of Instagram for kids under 13, but ultimately never did.

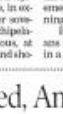
Zuckerberg also faced questions about his statement to Congress in 2021 that he did not give Instagram teams the goal of maximising time spent on the app. Lanier showed jurors emails from 2014 and 2015 in which Zuckerberg laid out aims to increase time spent on the app by double-digit percentage points. Zuckerberg said that while Meta previously had goals related to the amount of time users spent on the app, it has since changed its approach. "If you are trying to say my testimony was not accurate, I strongly disagree," he said.

The appearance was Zuckerberg's first in court on Instagram's effect on the mental health of young users. REUTERS

If convicted, Andrew faces max sentence of life term

▶Continued from P 1

Thames Valley Police confirmed the arrest of "a man in his sixties from Norfolk" as part of an investigation into the offence of misconduct in public office. After taking into custody of a royal family member as a fallout of revelations from the Epstein files was in sharp contrast to the official response in the US where cops have not as yet moved against anyone.



The allegations are not linked to accusations regarding Virginia Giuffre, whose family have been calling for Andrew to testify before the US Congress about his links to Jeffrey Epstein. Giuffre, who said she was forced to have sex with Andrew when she was aged 17 after being trafficked by Epstein, took her own life last year.

These allegations are related to his time as a UK trade envoy from 2001 to 2011, when he appears to have shared confidential UK govt documents with Epstein, according to the latest tranche of Epstein files released by the US department of justice.

On Thursday Andrew was in police custody being questioned, while his Sandringham home and his former home, Royal Lodge in Windsor, were being searched. He moved out of Royal Lodge recently owing to the damage he was doing to the royal family's reputation, but still has belongings there. The irony is it is the Crown Prosecution Service which will need to decide whether to charge the King's brother. In the British legal system, criminal offences are considered crimes against the "the Crown", or monarch. Misconduct in public office is a serious offence which carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. Andrew has always denied any wrongdoing.

Most political parties now realise importance of Hindus in B'desh's electoral politics: Culture min

▶Continued from P 1

He received over 1.4 lakh votes, defeating Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami's Mustarshid Billah, who secured about 12 lakh votes. Referring to the state of governance he inherited, Chowdhury said the previous govt led by Sheikh Hasina had left the country's institutions in tatters.

"Almost every thing was in disorder," he said, adding that after being elected to form the new govt, it was their duty to bring the country back on track. He said the BNP did not want to indulge in criticism of the past but aimed to move forward with new hopes and dreams to put Bangladesh on the path of development.

Explaining what he meant by institutional damage, Chowdhury alleged that when Hasina fled Bangladesh in 2024, the country was "completely broken". He claimed the biggest damage was done to the education system, alleging that it had become policy under Awami League to pass 98% of students in exams irrespective of merit. "It was done to falsely show that literacy rate of Bangladesh was increasing along with the passing percentage of students," he said.

He also accused the previous regime of damaging the country's cultural fabric. During the Awami League govt, he said, "all sorts of obscene dances and music along with hooliganism were encouraged while pushing our actual cultural values on the backburner." He said the new govt would work to repair those pillars while upholding the ethos of unity in diversity, which he claimed had been ruined.

On apprehensions regarding the safety of minorities, particularly Hindus, Chowdhury pointed to what he described as a significant turnout of Hindu voters in the recent elections. He said such turnout was not witnessed in other communities and reflected a shift in political thinking.

"Hindus realised that they cannot be treated as 'more vote bank' by any party in Bangladesh. They felt that they are an inseparable part of this Bangladesh," Chowdhury said.

He said the PM and other BNP leaders met Hindu voters before the elections to assure them of safety and security. "They realised that they too are independent citizens of this country with equal rights to life and livelihood as mentioned in our constitution. Hence, they voted in large numbers for the BNP, for which we are grateful," he said.

Chowdhury said most political parties had now realised the importance of Hindus in electoral politics, noting that their support was crucial in at least 80 of the total 299 constituencies in parliament. He said that earlier the majority of Hindu voters had supported Awami League, but after its leaders fled, many felt insecure. He recalled Rahman with worship to remove that fear and with their support.

On ties with India, Chowdhury said it was the new administration's duty to develop good relations with all neighbours, including India. "We want friendly ties which have mutual respect, interest, and understanding," he said. "We will work on issues related to internal security of both Bangladesh and India," he added.

As culture minister, Chowdhury said Bengali culture was rich and that Bangladesh had cultural ties with at least 48 countries, including India. He said govt would strengthen these ties by focusing on traditions followed by previous generations while fighting fundamentalism.

Trump writes to PM Tarique; seeks decisive action on defence front

Ahsan Tasnim

Dhaka: In his first letter to Bangladesh PM **Tarique Rahman**, US President Donald Trump has pushed for making US-Bangladesh ties "stronger than ever before" through "decisive action" to complete routine defence agreements and implementation of the reciprocal trade agreement. "I hope you will take decisive action to complete the routine defence agreements that would give your military access to high-end, American-made equipment — the best in the world," Trump said.

Trump said, "As you begin your term, I hope you will help me maintain the tremendous momentum in our trade relationship through the implementation of our Agreement on Reciprocal Trade, which benefits farmers and workers in both of our countries."

The president said his ambassador to Bangladesh — Brent Christensen — has his full confidence.

DAILY PLANET

S Korean former prez Yoon gets life term for imposing martial law in '24

Former South Korean president **Yoon Suk Yeol** was found guilty of leading an insurrection on Thursday and sentenced to life in prison for his brief imposition of martial law in 2024, a ruling that marks a dramatic culmination of the country's biggest political crisis in decades. The conservative leader was ousted from office after he declared martial law and sent troops to surround the national assembly on Dec 3, 2024, in a baffling attempt to overcome a legislature controlled by his liberal opponents. Yoon's martial law imposition, the first of its kind in more than four decades, recalled South Korea's past military-backed govts when authorities occasionally proclaimed emergency decrees that allowed them to station soldiers, tanks and armored vehicles on streets or in public places such as schools to prevent anti-govt protests.

Probe on into claims of bodies buried near Epstein ranch in New Mexico

New Mexico's department of justice said on Wednesday the state was investigating an allegation, which emerged from documents released by the US DOJ, that Jeffrey Epstein ordered the bodies of two foreign girls buried outside his remote New Mexico ranch. New Mexico department of justice spokesperson Lauren Rodriguez said it had requested from the US justice department an unredacted copy of an email in 2019 containing the allegation. The US justice department did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The FBI declined comment. "We are actively investigating this allegation and are conducting a broader review in light of the latest release from the US department of justice," Rodriguez said in an emailed response to case queries.

Canada sharpens skilled immigration system, unveils new Express Entry categories

Lubna Kably

Canada's immigration minister — Lena Metlege Diab, Wednesday night (India time) announced new Express Entry immigration categories for 2026. The writing on the wall is clear: the focus is on 'bringing in the right people to help build a stronger future'.

In this backdrop, immigration experts expect that Express Entry draws (the point-based pathway to enable skilled applicants to gain permanent residency) will focus on 'category-based' draws. With Canada's continued emphasis on boosting Francophone immigration, several French-language proficiency draws are also likely to be held this year.

The first Express Entry category draw for foreign medical doctors with Canadian work experience, will be held in the coming days. Diab also announced the addition of targeted Express Entry pathways for researchers and senior managers with Canadian experience, transport-sector workers such as pilots and aircraft mechanics, and skilled foreign military recruits for specialised roles (such as doctors and pilots).

At the same time, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), will continue category-based draws for candidates with strong French-language skills and for workers in existing priority sectors, including healthcare and social services professions (such as nurse practitioners, dentists, pharmacists, psychologists and chiropractors) and skilled 'trades' such as carpenters, plumbers and machinists and STEM-related occupations.

The parliament building in Ottawa

"We'll support education occupations: science, technology, engineering, and math. The STEM categories include engineers and cybersecurity specialists. Tomorrow's economy will be driven by innovation and technologies like AI. Growing these industries creates jobs and opportunities for future," said the minister. For Indians aspirants from the tech sector, the continued encouragement to candidates in the STEM field is good news, however immigration experts are quick to point out that cools no longer fall in the 'trade' category.

Under updated rules, the minimum work-experience requirement for occupational categories has been raised to one year within the past three years, compared with the earlier six-month requirement, though the experience no longer needs to be continuous.

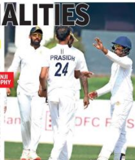
Diab stressed that, "IRCC's effort to attract talent is part of our government's International Talent Attraction Strategy. We're not waiting for the right people to find us. We're going out into the world to recruit the people our country needs, connect them with Canadian employers, and highlight why Canada is the best place in the world to build their careers and lives."

"Employers can plan, hire and invest with confidence, with an Express Entry program that functions effectively for them," she added.

The announcement comes as Canada recalibrates immigration levels following high inflows in the years ago, while this helped address labour shortages, it also added pressure on housing, infrastructure and social services. Govt has since moved to stabilise the system and reduce immigrant intakes. As of Jun 1, Canada had paused its start-up visa program. When asked about it, Diab mentioned that consultations are ongoing to determine how it should function, going forward.

KARNATAKA FINISH THE FORMALITIES

'Home' Final With J&K At Hubballi From Feb 24



DOMINANT FORCE: Karnataka players celebrate in Lucknow on Thursday

Manuja.Veerappa@timesofindia.com

RANJI TROPHY

Lucknow: On a day when the result was a mere formality and Karnataka's place in the Ranji Trophy final was already assured, the umpires briefly kept the semifinal against Uttarakhand alive, much to the bemusement of players and broadcasters alike.

The only moment of intrigue at the Ekana Cricket Stadium here on Thursday came at tea, when captains Kunal Chandela and Karun Nair, standing in for an injured Devdutt Padikkal, shook hands, signalling what everyone believed was the end of proceedings. Presentation signage was rolled out, players drifted towards the ceremony area and one even headed to the dressing room to pack for the airport.

However, a few minutes later, play was ordered to resume after tea. With Uttarakhand six wickets down, umpires pointed to the rulebook, noting that an outright result for Karnataka was still technically possible.

A visibly disgruntled Karnataka side returned to the field, but with the match long decided, Abhay Negi (57 n.o) and Saurabh Rawat (53 n.o) treated the final session as batting practice, while the opposition wound down the clock.

The match was finally called off less than an hour after tea, with Uttarakhand at 260/6.

Karnataka will now host first-time finalists Jammu and Kashmir in Hubballi at the KSCA Rajnagar Stadium — the first time the northern Karnataka region will stage a Ranji Trophy final. "We are playing the final after a long time. We've been working very hard for the last few years but couldn't quite make it," said Karnataka head coach Yere Goud. "Playing at home makes it even more special."

Goud was quick to underline the challenge posed by Jammu and Kashmir. "They have done extremely well, beating MP and Bengal. A lot of credit should go to them. They are a very dangerous side. We need to play good cricket and focus on our processes — we'll have to play well to beat them."

KARNATAKA SWEAT OVER PADIKKAL

Karnataka skipper Devdutt Padikkal did not take the field on the final day after suffering a cut while fielding on Wednesday, which required five stitches on his right hand. However, Goud played down concerns over his availability for the final starting on Tuesday. "When I saw the cut, I was pretty sure he'll make it. He probably needs two to three days' rest and should be fine for the game," Goud said.

SHREYAS' LANDMARK

The match also marked a personal milestone for leg spinner Shreyas Gopal, who became the latest Karnataka bowler to reach 300 first-class wickets, which came in his 97th appearance in the format. The 32-year-old is the side's leading wicket-taker this season with 46 scalps. "It's a special feeling to reach the milestone in a semifinal and it gives me a lot of confidence going into the final," said Shreyas.

Earlier, Karnataka, resuming at 299/6, were bowled out for 323, with KL Rahul left unbeaten on 86 after running out of partners. Karnataka's focus now shifts to Hubballi and a chance to add a ninth Ranji Trophy title to their storied history.

SCOREBOARD

Karnataka (I innings): 736
Uttarakhand (I innings): 233
Karnataka (II innings, o/n 299/6): KL Rahul (not out) 86, Vyshak Vijaykumar st [illegible] b Mishra 8, Shikhar Shetty b Mishra 7, Prasidh Krishna (not out) 2, Devdutt Padikkal (absent hurt)
Extras (B-0, NB-5, LB-3, W-1) **18**
Total (all out; 74.3 overs) 323.
Fall of wickets: 7-299, 8-31, 9-323
Bowling: Abhay Negi 19-4-63-2, Jasmejay Joshi 9-0-54-0, Mayank Mishra 18-3-93-4, Avneesh Sudha 12-1-58-1, J Suchith 12-0-50-1, Aditya Rawat 3.3-0-15-0, Lakshya Raichandani 1-0-3-0
Uttarakhand (II innings): Bhupen Lalwani c Krathik b Prasidh 35, Prasanth Chopra c Krathik b Vyshak 8, Avneesh Sudha c Rahul b Shreyas 44, Lakshya Raichandani c Krathik b Prasidh 10, J Suchith c Avneesh (sub) b Shreyas 19, Saurabh Rawat (not out) 53, Kunal Chandela st Krathik b Shreyas 20, Abhay Negi (not out) 57
Extras: (B-12, LB-2, W-6) **20. Total (6 wkts; 62 overs) 260.**
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-48, 3-72, 4-103, 5-128, 6-158
Bowling: Vidyadhar Patil 4-0-13-0, Prasidh Krishna 6-1-17-2, Vyshak Vijaykumar 4-0-22-1, Shikhar Shetty 9-1-37-0, Shreyas Gopal 19-1-83-3, Karun Nair 2-0-9-0, Mayank Agarwal 2-0-5-0.

Uttarakhand set sights on bigger goals

Fazal Khan | TNN

Lucknow: Since their first season in 2018, Uttarakhand have reached the quarterfinals of Ranji Trophy on only two occasions. This time, they went one better as they made it to the semifinals of India's premier domestic competition. Even if they failed to take the final step as Karnataka got the better of them, Uttarakhand have made everyone sit up and take notice.

The team's coach Manish Jha was proud of his side's performance. "It was a big challenge for us to break the quarterfinal barrier. We tried our best but things didn't go our way against Karnataka. Our aim now would be to make the final next year and clinch the trophy for the first time," Jha told **TOI**.

The coach believes Uttarakhand's journey to the semifinal has been a huge learning curve. "We were very emotional in the dressing room after we managed to make it to the last four. We got carried away in the semis. We couldn't capitalise on the small advantages we managed to create."

Still, Jha feels the future is bright for Uttarakhand cricket. "Our left-arm spinner Mayank Mishra (39 wkts) is the highest wicket-taker this season. Kunal Chandela is in the top 10 run-getters club. Our teenagers Lakshya Raichandani and Aditya Rawat have huge potential. Players from our state don't get too much exposure. But they are showing their mettle and delivering when it matters," he said.

India women surrender meekly

Slump To 19-Run Loss; Series At 1-1

Getty Images
Australia's Georgia Voll sweeps on way to a solid 88 against India in Canberra on Thursday

Canberra: A record opening stand between Georgia Voll and Beth Mooney paved the way for Australia to level the three-match T20I series with a 19-run victory against India in the second match here on Thursday. Voll and Mooney added 128 runs for the first wicket to register Australia's highest opening stand against India in T20Is, with the hosts posting 163 for 5.

Despite making a sparkling start, India crumbled in the end to finish at 144/9. Ashleigh Gardner claimed 3/22 while Kim Garth, Annabel

T20Is DOWN UNDER

Sutherland and Australia captain Sophie Molineux took two wickets each. India were 65/1 in the ninth over after which the visitors lost six wickets for seven runs towards the end.

India were off the blocks quickly as Shafali Verma's early fireworks were followed by Smriti Mandhana opening up. The two Indian openers put on 54 in the Powerplay to put the team on track of the chase. But Molineux applied the brakes when she pinned Shafali leg-before for a 23-ball 29 (5x4) and Gardner got the key wicket of Jemimah Rodrigues (4).

India's run-rate slowed down with the two consecutive wickets and a third followed soon when Mandhana was caught sharply down the leg by Mooney off Garth. With India struggling at 71 for three, skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (30) and Richa Ghosh (19) joined forces and did well to add 55 runs for the fourth wicket. However, the asking rate kept moving up, which in turn forced the Indians to take unwanted risks. PTI

356 international matches played by Harmanpreet Kaur, making her the most capped player in women's cricket. She broke New Zealand's Suzie Bates' record. Harmanpreet has played 6 Tests, 161 ODIs and 189 T20Is.

Brief scores: Australia 163/5 (Georgia Voll 88, Beth Mooney 46; Arundhati Reddy 2/38) beat **India** 144/9 (Harmanpreet Kaur 36; Ashleigh Gardner 3/22) by 19 runs.

A happy dilemma for Karnataka Kashmiris

Nithya.Mandyam@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: The Ranji Trophy final, to be played in Hubballi from Feb 24, has stirred mixed emotions among Kashmiris settled in Karnataka. As their adopted home side chases a ninth title, their hearts are divided — rooting for Karnataka on one hand and for Jammu and Kashmir's fairytale run in the competition on the other.

"Of course, our favourite is Karnataka (the state we call home) and we want it to bring the trophy home. At the same time, we are happy for Kashmir's dream run," said Irfan Aazim, an artefacts trader settled in the tech capital.

For many Kashmiris who rebuilt their lives in Karnataka, watching both their 'homes' fight for the title would be deeply personal. R K Mattoo, the president of Kashmir Sabha in Karnataka, said the team's entry into the final represented more than a sporting milestone.

HOME AND AWAY

"For years, J&K was considered one of the weaker teams. Now, they have reached the final. As someone who left Kashmir in 1990 and found acceptance and opportunity in Karnataka, this is a proud moment," Mattoo said. He added that nearly 10,000 Kashmiri Pandits have settled in Karnataka over the years. "Karnataka gave us shelter and dignity. We respect and support the Karnataka team, but seeing J&K rise to this level gives us immense pride," he said.

For Arvind Waza, a banker based in Bengaluru, the final offers a unique situation — torn but joyful. "I feel like more of a Kannadiga today because Karnataka has been my home for decades. At the same time, watching J&K in a Ranji final is incredibly special. It proves that talent from our region can shine on the national stage," he said.

Echoing Waza, Sajid Hussain, a Kashmiri shop owner on M G Road, described the development as historic. "For decades, we only hoped for this moment. It is like a dream-come-true for every Kashmiri cricket lover. This is not just a match — it is history for us," he said.

Ramesh Kumar Pandita, a retired engineer who grew up playing cricket, believes the achievement signals a cultural shift. "It is a very good thing that J&K reached the final. After the abrogation of Article 370, we saw more transparency and better systems. This is good news for all of us. It gives hope to the youth," he said.

(With inputs from Syeda Tatheer Hussain and Akhilandeshwari J)

India pencil in top men, women cricketers

Sabi.Hussain@timesofindia.com

LEADING THE WAY: Suryakumar Yadav and Harmanpreet Kaur

New Delhi: With an eye on cricket as a medal sport at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, India will send its top men and women cricketers to this year's Asian Games in Japan, with regular captains Suryakumar Yadav and Harmanpreet Kaur set to lead their respective sides in the T20 format competition.

ASIAN GAMES

It's been learnt that the Indian cricket board (BCCI) sent the names of established cricketers to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) as part of the official contingent long list, which will be forwarded to the Games' Organising Committee (OC) at the end of next month. "India will send its 'A' team when the final names are decided in May end. The BCCI has sent the names of leading men and women cricketers to the IOA. All the top cricketers will be available for selection," a source told **TOI**.

Sources said the men's long list included current T20 skipper Yadav, Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan, Tilak Varma, Shivam Dube, Hardik Pandya, Mohammed Siraj, Arshdeep Singh, Varun Chakaravarthy, Washington Sundar, Axar Patel and Rinku Singh.

Similarly, the women's long list comprised Harmanpreet, Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Renuka Thakur, Sneh Rana, Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh, Arundhati Reddy, Shreyanka Patil, Kranti Gaud and Sree Charani.

SNAP SHOTS

Ansimova edges Andreeva

Amanda Anisimova ended a tearful Mirra Andreeva's Dubai title defence on Thursday with a comeback 2-6, 7-5, 7-6 (7/4) victory in the quarterfinals. The second-seeded American trailed the fifth seed Russian Andreeva by a set and a break before rallying back to complete a two-hour 38-minute win. She thereby booked a place in the semi-finals of a WTA 1000 event for the fourth time in her career. Anisimova now gets a rematch with fellow American Jessica Pegula.

Alcaraz, Sinner in quarters: Carlos Alcaraz maintained his 100-percent start to the year by batting past Frenchman Valentin Royer in Doha on Wednesday, while his great rival Jannik Sinner also secured a quarterfinal place. Alcaraz notched his ninth straight win of 2025 with a 6-2, 7-5 success despite trailing 5-2 in the second set. Sinner eased to a 6-3, 7-5 win over Australian Alexei Popyrin.

PHF chief resigns: Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) president Tariq Bugti has resigned in the aftermath of the hotel fiasco during the national team's troubled tour of Australia earlier this month. Bugti on Thursday confirmed that he had sent his resignation to the patron-in-chief of PHF, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif. The controversy started when a video surfaced on social media showing Pakistani players standing on the streets of Sydney with their luggage.

Gandas joins Shaurya at top: Manu Gandas produced a sensational six-under 64 in the third round to join Shaurya Bhattacharya at the top of the leaderboard at the Players Championship in Kolkata on Thursday. Gandas (66-69-64), who was overnight tied seventh and nine shots off the lead, took his total to 11-under 199. Bhattacharya (64-62-73), the halfway leader by four shots, slipped into the joint lead at 11-under 199.

Ridhima triumphs: Ridhima Dilawari produced a superb bogey-free three-under 68 to win the fourth leg of the Women's Pro Golf Tour in Pune on Thursday. This was Ridhima's second win in four starts this season, and she was also runner-up once. It helped her consolidate her position at the top of the Order of Merit. Ridhima carded 68 and totalled 3-under 208 for three days and finished six shots clear of Vani Kapoor (75), who was 3-over 214. Amateur Anuradha Chaudhuri (69) was tied second with Vani.

Mumbai City pip Chennaiyin: Mumbai City FC began their Indian Super League season on a winning note, edging past Chennaiyin FC 1-0 in Mumbai on Thursday. The match was decided by an own goal in the 48th minute by Pritam Kotal.

BWF downgrades India?

Manne.Ratnakar@timesofindia.com

Hyderabad: The Badminton World Federation's (BWF) recent snub where the world body has allotted only two tournaments per year to India, has raised questions about the country's badminton ecosystem.

In BWF's revamped schedule for the 2027-30 cycle, India has been allotted only two tournaments per year. Currently, India has been conducting two Super-100s (Odisha and Guwahati Open), the India Open Super-750 and the Syed Modi Super-300.

But from 2027 onwards, it will be hosting only the India Open Super-750 and Syed Modi Super-100, the latter downgraded from a Super-300 to Super-100 event. It is possible that the global outrage that followed the poor conduct of the Super-750 in New Delhi could be one of the reasons. Bird droppings on court, poor air quality in the Capital in January, and related withdrawals caused acute embarrassment and caught everyone's attention.

BADMINTON

In addition, many blame this 'downgrade' on India not having enough influence within the BWF council, the governing body of the sport. A country like France, with not enough players or fans, has been allotted a Super-750 and Super-300 events.

Powerhouses of badminton like China, Malaysia and Indonesia continue to get their fair share of tournaments. While China has been allotted a Super-1000, Super-750 and Super-100, Hong Kong and Macau were allotted Super-750 and Super-300 tournaments.

Malaysia got a Super-1000, Super-500 and Super-300. The case for Indonesia is similar. But India, which has been challenging the likes of Malaysia, Indonesia and Korea over the last 15 years appears to have clearly been handed a raw deal. BAI secretary Sanjay Mishra denied this argument and said that India has been offered Super-1000. "We were offered a Super-1000, but since the tournament is over 11 days and offers more prize money, we had to decline," Mishra told TOI.

"All the countries have got fewer tournaments now. Even China got just three events. Since we are getting one Super-300, we thought it is better to have it in Lucknow as Syed Modi is one of our oldest events," he said, adding that India will bid for the Sudirman Cup. "We are hosting the World championships this year and will decide on bidding for the Sudirman Cup next," Mishra said.

Yet, this downgrade will have a clear trickledown effect that will hurt Indian shuttlers directly. Down from four to two and no Super-300 in the coming cycle would mean that Indian players now would have to struggle for ranking points by travelling to tournaments abroad, and that would mean having to spend more money.

Vaishnavi raises the bar to make quarters

Ashim.Sanam @timesofindia.com

Sport Auth
IN FOCUS: Vaishnavi Adkar in action on Thursday

Bengaluru: India's Vaishnavi Adkar dug deep to enter the quarterfinals of the ITF Women's Open here on Thursday. The wildcard entrant, ranked 690 on the WTA Tour, registered a come-from-behind 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 (10/8) win against eighth seed Mai Hontama of Japan in two hours 49 minutes. She will meet Taylah Preston of Australia.

However, the other two Indians in the singles fray, Sahaja Yamalapalli (436) and Shrivalli Bhamidipaty (543),

TENNIS

were knocked out of the W100 event. India No. 1 Sahaja suffered a 0-6, 0-6 loss to top seed Talia Gibson (111) of Australia. Shrivalli battled hard before going down 2-6, 7-6 (9-7), 1-6 to third seed Hanne Vandewinkel (124) of Belgium in two hours 29 minutes.

The day belonged to the 21-year-old Vaishnavi, who overcame the challenge from the Japanese player, ranked 430 places above her. Hontama was two points away from the next round when she led 5-2 in the third-set tie-break. It was now or never for the Pune player, who raised her level at the crucial juncture.

Vaishnavi, who had failed to convert her first match point in the 10th game of the decider, struck two powerful forehand winners, and consecutive unforced errors from her opponent opened the door for the Indian. She squandered another opportunity in the tie-break but, with the home crowd urging her on, she held her nerve to convert her fifth match point when Hontama netted a backhand.

"Every point matters in a tie-break. No matter what the score is, you can always come back. I was 2-5 down and I came back. I took it one point at a time, stayed in the present and it worked," said Vaishnavi, who is playing in her first W100 event.

The victory had seemed distant when Hontama, who achieved her career-best ranking of 105 in Aug 2024, took the first set. Her groundstrokes proved too strong for Vaishnavi, who was broken in the third and seventh games. The momentum shifted in the second set as Vaishnavi surged to a 3-0 lead. The Japanese, who had dominated from the baseline in the opener, began committing unforced errors.

The home player then broke serve thrice and forced the round-of-16 contest into a decider after Hontama sent a forehand wide. There was little to separate the two in the final set until the eighth game. They were tied at 4-4 after trading breaks twice. Vaishnavi earned a match point in the 10th game, but Hontama saved it with a cross-court forehand winner and let out a scream. The Japanese held the upper hand for much of the tie-break, but Vaishnavi found her range at the right moment.

Results (round of 16): Vaishnavi Adkar (Ind) bt 8-Mai Hontama (Jpn) 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 (8); 1-Talia Gibson (Aus) bt Sahaja Yamalapalli (Ind) 6-0, 6-0; 5-Polina Iatcenko bt Arina Vasilescu (Rou) 6-7, 6-3, 6-2; [illegible] Tian (Chn) bt Erika Andreeva 6-4, 6-3; 2-Lanlana Tararudee (Tha) bt Mei Yamaguchi (Jpn) 6-4, 6-4; 4-Taylah Preston (Aus) bt Kristiana Sidorova 6-3, 6-3; 7-Elena Pridankina bt Jesika Giraldova (Per) 6-0, 6-1.

Bees give a scare

Earlier in the day, a swarm of bees interrupted the first set of singles matches for a brief while. The players in action and the few fans in attendance rushed towards the lounge area. No one was reportedly hurt. TNN

Sai's all-round show powers BEMRC

Times News Network

Bengaluru: Sai Susheel Reddy put up an all-round show to power BEMRC Cricket to a 33-run win over ITI Sports Club in the KSCA Group II – Division II league-cum-knockout tournament here recently.

Opting to bat, Susheel struck a brisk ton to power BEMRC to 168/4 in 20 overs. The opener scored a 61-ball 107 - laced with seventeen hits to the fence and three over. Susheel, along with Srinivasnk (38), stitched a strong partnership of 146 from 101 balls. In reply, ITI SC were restricted to 131/9 in 19 overs. While Pradeep Kumar led the attack with a three-wicket haul, Susheel and Hemanth Patil picked up two wickets each.

Brief scores: BEMRC: 168/4 in 20 overs (Sai Susheel Reddy 107, Srinivas 38) **bt ITI SC: 131/9 in 19 overs** (Joseph Raj 31, Gautam Gaokar 31 n.o; Pradeep Kumar 3-29, Hemanth Patil 2-23, Sai 2-32). **SWR CW, Mysore:** 177/7 in 20 overs (Srinath V 44, Prabanjit Nagesha 26, Varun Ramesh 50; Alok Kumar 2-34, Dinesh K 2-37) **bt BEML, KGF: 152/9 in 20 overs** (Dinesh 72, Shashank HC 5-22, Sidak Ali 2-26, Sharukh 2-27). **VISL CC, Bhadravathi: 65 in 12.1 overs** (Mohsin Sharma 2-23, Gautam Kumar 5-21, Durgesh Dhakane 2-6) **lost to GTRE SC: 67/0 in 15.3 overs** (Bolaiz 2-5, Yogi 4-17). **BEML RC: 190/4 in 20 overs** (Ashwin Santosh 67, Vineeth Manjunath 65) **lost to Infosys: 192/5 in 20 overs** (Swaroop SN 103 (66b; 10x4, 5x6), Arjun Patil 2-42, Harsh Oza 2-34, Gopi KJ 2-34). **Commercial Tax: 146 in 17.1 overs** (Dhruv Modha 63, Samarth Kumar 2-22, Ayush Ponnappa 4-21, Darshan S 2-40) **lost to DWSSB EA: 147/7 in 19.2 overs** (Adarsh MA 39, Aras KA 2-31, Jeevan 3-18). **Hutti Gold Mines: 98/9 in 20 overs** (Apsar Pasha 32 n.o; Anosh Maiya G 2-16, Nikhil Vedanth 2-19) **lost to L&T SC: 100/1 in 13 overs** (Pruthviraj 51 n.o, Suman Madan 27). **VBI: 187/7 in 20 overs** (Ganesha Dasagara 29, Vinu Prasad 32, Dhanush N 2-24) **lost to SRI, Mysore: 121/1 in 12.3 overs** (Vaibhav Srivatsa 65 n.o, Bharath 37 n.o). **SAC Jakkur: 145/6 in 18 overs** (Rohit Shetty 60 n.o, Ashish Kumar 42; Murali 2-28) **bt KGS Club: 81 in 18 overs** (Abhishek J 36; Ranjesh UK 3-10, Aman Kashi 3-20). **CMTI Club: 117 in 18.4 overs** (Nandhan V 58, Sarath Nair 3-10, Venkatesh N 2-16, Vishal Kumar 2-22) **lost to CIL: 118/3 in 19.2 overs** (Arpan BV 27, V Chethan 49 n.o, Krishnaswamy 2-23). **ADE SC: 153/6 in 19.5 overs** (Chandra 36, Pratham R 27, Prayosh KM 42; Venkata Ranka 2-41) **bt EPF Club: 150/7 in 20 overs** (Kiran Kumar 38, Gaurav Venkatesh 50, Shahebaz Hussain 4-21, Deepak Singh 2-29). **DH & Prajavani: 167/7 in 20 overs** (Nikhil HS 189 n.o; 57b; 14x4, 4x6) **bt BOSA, SWR, B'lore: 125/9 in 20 overs** (Pratyakshwari Kumar 30, James Prasanna 48, Vikram 2-18, Sarayanan S 2-13). **KSP: 168/6 in 20 overs** (Shiva Matta 46, Sunil Kumar 32, Samashekara Murthy 42 n.o; Aaron Joseph 2-33) **bt Bhagirathi Group: 153/7 in 20 overs** (Ambresh K 77 n.o; Ganesh Kumar 3-31, Akhilesh HG 3-39). **LRDE: 164/9 in 20 overs** (Karan Raghavendra 52, Satish Kumar 27, Ramesh BS 2-30, Pradeepkumar KR 2-27, Murali N 2-27) **bt Bangalore Dairy SC: 134 in 19.3 overs** (Kumar Raj 34; Kartik Jha 4-20, Sunny Kanchi 3-23). **BHEL EDN: 105/0 in 20 overs** (Sunil DB 36, Sachod Gowda 30, Sanjay 2-20) **lost to Railway Instt.Rdm, KR Puram: 107/2 in 13.1 overs** (Lokith Gowda 39 n.o). **Triton SC: 178/2 in 20 overs** (Yashwanth Patel 77, Srithan V 66 n.o) **bt BHEL EPD: 69 in 15.1 overs** (Pranav 15; 2-21, Ishaan 52-30, Shanthyan 4-11). **Titan: 172/6 in 20 overs** (Mohith BA 49, Karna Vamshi 60, Vineet Ashok 29 n.o; Roshan Raju 2-29) **bt BEML (2) SC, Mysore: 62 in 14.4 overs** (Swapnil Urs 34; Srinivas Prasad 2-21, David Bird 5-12). **ADB CC: 154/7 in 20 overs** (Akshay 35, Mathi Ananda M 22, Ravi Kamble 41 n.o; Umesh M 3-22, Fakruddin Agadi 2-19) **lost to NAL: 155/3 in 18.1 overs** (Naveen V 25, Mahesh N 49 n.o, Praveen Kumar 27 n.o). **Bosch: 182/5 in 20 overs** (Samarth Srinivas 36, Sharath Srinivas 112 n.o (57b; 12x4, 4x6); Nishanth Gopal 2-27) **bt ITO: 109 in 15.5 overs** (Kishore Dutt 45, Akshay 33; Amogh R 2-36, Geeth Natraj 3-4, Naresh Kishore 2-18).

Bodo/Glimt stun Inter

Norway's Bodo/Glimt stunned Inter Milan in the Champions League on Wednesday, beating last season's runners-up 3-1 in the first leg of their knockout phase playoff tie after Anthony Gordon scored four as Newcastle United hammered Qarabag 6-1 in Azerbaijan.

Elsewhere, Atletico Madrid were held by Club Brugge in a 3-3 draw, while Bayer Leverkusen beat Olympiacos 2-0 away in Greece.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Bodo/Glimt, Norwegian champions in four of the last six years, made it to this stage after some impressive results during the league phase, including wins at home to Manchester City and away to Atletico. The club from north of the Arctic Circle were therefore not afraid of the current Serie A leaders and went in front on 20 minutes through Sondre Brunstad Fet. Francesco Pio Esposito equalised on the half-hour mark for Inter, the goal standing after a VAR check despite an apparent handball in the build-up.

Sondre Brunstad Fet

However, Bodo/Glimt went back in front just after the hour when Kasper Hogh's brilliant lay-off set up Jens Petter Hauge to score, and Hogh found the net himself three minutes later. **Results:** Qarabag (1) Jafarguliyev 55 lost to Newcastle 6 (Gordon 3, 32-pen, 34, 45+1-pen, Thiaw 8, Murphy 72). Bodo/Glimt 3 (Brunstad Fet 20, Hauge 61, Hogh 64) bt Inter Milan 1 (Esposito 30). Club Brugge 3 (Onyedika 52, Tresoldi 60, Tzolis 89) drew with Atletico Madrid 3 (Alvarez 8-pen, Lookman 45+3, Ordonez 79-og). Olympiacos 0 lost to Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Schick 60, 63). AGENCIES

Sloppy Arsenal drop points

Wolverhampton: Riccardo Calafiori scored a 94th-minute own goal as Arsenal let a two-goal lead slip against Wolverhampton Wanderers in a 2-2 draw at Molineux on Wednesday to waste a big chance to surge ahead in the title race.

Arsenal have 58 points from 27 games, five ahead of second-placed Manchester City having played a game more. Wolves are on 10 points from 27 games, still one shy of Derby County's record low of 11. Arsenal have won only three of their last eight games in the Premier League, a run of form that has allowed City to get close.

FOOTBALL WRAP

Results: EPL: Wolves 2 (Buene 61, Calafiori 90+4-og) drew with Arsenal 2 (Saka 5, Hincapie 56). **Spanish league:** Levante 0 lost to Villarreal 1 (Mikautadze 57). **Italian league:** AC Milan 1 (Loce 64) drew with Como 1 (Paz 52). AGENCIES

[illegible]

"WE'RE ON A REALLY GOOD TRAJECTORY. IT'D BE NICE FOR US TO KEEP TRACKING IN THAT DIRECTION AND NOT JUST DROP OFF LIKE A LOT OF COUNTRIES AND A LOT OF TEAMS HAVE DONE OVER THE YEARS."
— Harry Manenti, ITALY'S STAND-IN SKIPPER

India's Problems Against Finger Spinners In Focus As Super 8s Loom

TRIAL BY OFF-SPIN

Abhishek Sharma is bowled by Dutch spinner Aryan Dutt on Wednesday

Gaurav.Gupta@timesofindia.com

Ahmedabad: India may have ended the league phase of the World Cup unbeaten, but there are a few glitches they need to iron out before taking on much stronger sides in the Super 8 stage. India's catching has been below par but the most glaring shortcoming has been their batters' failure to dominate spin, a concern that has also contributed to their home Test defeats in recent years.

Two major reasons India have been bogged down by rival spinners — especially off-spinners — have been the presence of so many left-handers in the lineup and the poor form of explosive opener Abhishek Sharma, who has registered three consecutive ducks.

So far in the tournament, India have faced 42 overs of spin, scoring 315 runs at a run rate just above seven. Spinners have already accounted for 15 Indian wickets. On Wednesday, Dutch off-spinner Aryan Dutt returned figures of 2/19 in four overs.

Thriving on some fine spells by their spinners, Associate teams like the USA and the Netherlands have given India a scare before eventually going down.

India's assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate acknowledged that teams were targeting them with finger spin, particularly given that the Men in Blue have several left-handers in the lineup. The entire top three (Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan and Tilak Varma) are left-handed while Shivam Dube, Rinku Singh and Axar Patel add to that count.

"The Dutch guys took pace off the ball a lot of the time. And obviously teams are bowling a lot of finger spin to us, with so many left-handers in our lineup. That is a challenge. It has made it easier for the opposition. We don't have many options. We've got Sanju sitting on the side," ten Doeschate said.

It is a problem area India need to address before their Super 8 opener against South Africa here on Sunday. The Proteas boast quality spin options in captain Aiden Markram, George Linde and Keshav Maharaj. Even West Indies and Zimbabwe — the other teams in their group — are well stocked in the spin department and pose a threat that cannot be ignored.

The Windies, as they showed in their league-stage match against England at the Wankhede Stadium, have an effective spin trio in Gudakesh Motie, Akeal Hosein and Roston Chase. Zimbabwe's four-pronged spin attack of Sikandar Raza, Ryan Burl, Graeme Cremer and Wellington Masakadza can also spring a surprise.

Ten Doeschate pointed out that it was finger spin that was troubling India's usually aggressive batters. "I'd say finger spin (is the problem). If you take the combined figures, Pakistan bowled 14 overs of finger spin in the last game and, off the top of my head, it was something like 4/78. So it's not a great number. Colombo was a particularly difficult wicket. The numbers against the Netherlands improved towards the back end. But again, Aryan Dutt bowling four overs for what he did was a big challenge," he said, adding that bigger grounds had increased India's woes.

"I think these two venues in particular — with a bigger boundary here and obviously a slower wicket in Colombo — exaggerate that. But it's something we're going to have to focus on. With the amount of finger spin we're going to get in the next three games, it's going to be important that we dominate that phase of the game," he added.

102 Balls of off-spin faced by India in this World Cup so far, the most by any team in the tournament.

6.23 India's strike rate against off-spin, the third worst in the World Cup behind Nepal (5.25) and Oman (5.42). Apart from Namibia (6.8), every other team has a strike rate of 8 and above against this style of spin.

31 Balls of off-spin faced by India's **Tilak Varma** in the World Cup so far, the second-most of any batter behind Quinton de Kock (35 balls). Varma has scored just 26 runs off these deliveries while being dismissed once. De Kock has scored 40.

SOURCE: CRICINFO

> **I think on better wickets, you won't see our (left-handed) batters struggling against spin. You can hit through the line with more confidence. But the point is that we need to have plans where the wickets do hold and grip and the (longer) boundaries are there. We need to be able to have a game plan to deal with that threat. Teams are bowling a lot of fingerspin to us because we have so many left-handers, so it's a challenge, and (it's) going to be a differentiator in the second phase of this competition."**
>
> —**Ryan ten Doeschate** | ASSISTANT COACH, ON THE PRESENCE OF SIX LEFT-HANDERS IN INDIA'S TOP EIGHT

Ten Doeschate felt that India's batters have also looked vulnerable because the league-stage wickets have offered some assistance to spinners. "It's not a sudden thing. The wickets we've played bilateral series on over the last 18 months have been really good batting tracks. Then, as soon as you come to a wicket that offers a bit of hold, it becomes a challenge.

"So it might look like a short-term issue. On better wickets, you won't see it — you can hit through the ball with more confidence. But the point is we need plans for wickets that do hold and where the boundaries are bigger. We need a clear game plan to deal with that threat," he said.

Given all the talk of 'intent' and 'fearless' approach in T20Is, India's post-Powerplay drop in run rate has also been very surprising.

TIME TO ASK APOLLO

Big expectations weighing Abhishek down: Gavaskar

Ahmedabad: Former captain Sunil Gavaskar says Abhishek Sharma is struggling to cope with the weight of expectations in the T20 World Cup and wants the opener to avoid playing across the line at the start of his innings. Abhishek has registered three consecutive ducks so far.

"Abhishek Sharma is a lovely guy but expectations seem to be weighing on him. If he had started well against USA, it would have been different. Now, the pressure of being the big six-hitter and top batter is showing. With his shot range, he needs to spend time in the middle. He cannot try to hit a boundary or six off the first ball of his innings. If the big shots come, fine. But he shouldn't force himself to play the big shots across the line," Gavaskar told Star Sports.

"Take a single and get off the mark. Even four dot balls don't matter. He can make up for them later. He needs to play smarter at the start. Spend an over or two settling in, then play his natural game. First, just get off the mark. Once he gets it, everything will fall into place," Gavaskar said. PTI

I've become smarter: Dube

Gaurav.Gupta@timesofindia.com

Ahmedabad: For someone who once got picked for India only when Hardik Pandya was injured — and who even struggled to find a place in the Mumbai side for a season — Shivam Dube has come a long way.

His ability to tonk spinners for towering sixes earned him a recall for the 2024 T20 World Cup, with selectors preferring him over the more established finisher Rinku Singh. Two years later, the Mumbai and CSK allrounder is emerging as India's 'silent' but decidedly violent hero at the 2026 T20 World Cup.

In a tournament where India's top order has largely struggled to dominate spin, Dube's impactful contributions have been worth their weight in gold. On Wednesday night at the Narendra Modi Stadium, Dube enhanced his credentials as one of world cricket's premier power-hitters with a match-winning 66 off just 31 balls, including six thunderous sixes, against the Netherlands in India's final league match.

Unlike the modern T20 specialist who thrives on improvisation, Dube keeps it simple. Standing tall at the crease, the Mumbaikar relies on his long levers, clean timing and brute power to dispatch anything pitched in his arc. Before this innings, the 32-year-old had chipped in with useful cameos of 23 (16 balls) and 27 (17 balls) against Namibia and Pakistan. In the build-up to the World Cup, he had smashed 65 off 23 balls against New Zealand in Vizag.

On Wednesday, however, it wasn't instant fireworks. Dube began cautiously, scoring just six off his first 11 balls and surviving a close lbw review off Dutch off-spinner Aryan Dutt. But once set, he exploded in trademark fashion.

"It was a little tough on this wicket, but this is the situation I love. I was under pressure for some time, but I was enjoying it," Dube said. "The off-spinner bowled really well — four dot balls in that over. But I knew I would cover it later. Some balls were skidding, some kept low, one spun as well. The situation demanded something else, so I had to play accordingly."

Dube explained that his ability to clear the ropes allows him to absorb early pressure without panic.

"When you play dot balls in T20, there is pressure. But I know that if I'm on two off 10 balls, I can hit two sixes in the next five balls and cover it. That always stays in my mind. The wicket had fallen, so building a partnership was important. Even if you play a few quiet balls, you can make it up later."

A few years ago, Dube carried the tag of being vulnerable to genuine pace and the short ball. Over time, he has worked diligently to plug that gap. Against the Netherlands, he smashed three sixes off pacer Logan van Beek, underlining his growth. "When you play in those situations, you learn," he said. "I've become smarter. I know what a bowler can try — short balls, slower balls. I've worked on those areas. Game awareness is very important and that has improved."

Dube credited his stint with Chennai Super Kings for sharpening his game. "When I first came to CSK, there were things I was struggling with. I knew I could dominate, but I had to work really hard on the short ball. It wasn't easy. I had to give it extra time and face extra deliveries. That's what I did."

Aware that bowlers now target him with short balls and change-ups rather than full deliveries, Dube prepares accordingly. "They won't bowl me too many yorkers or length balls. They'll try to go short or use slower balls. I prepare myself for that. Today, I couldn't take the strike rate high immediately, but there was a moment when I felt this was the time to go. I knew today was my day."

Until the 2024 T20 World Cup, Dube's strike rate against pace in T20Is was 134. It has now climbed to 172 — a dramatic transformation.

WI end group stage with all-win record

Saibal.Bose@timesofindia.com

Kolkata: West Indies quite expectedly finished their Group C engagements with an all-win record following a 42-run victory over Italy at the Eden Gardens here on Thursday, but they will surely have a close look at the way they went about it. On a wicket that did not allow you to go hammer-and-tongs from the very first ball, a few deliveries had to be played with caution.

However, Shai Hope (75; 46b, 6x4, 4x6) apart, very few of the West Indies batters were judicious in their shot selection. Perhaps the complacency of playing a dead rubber had crept in as they managed a below-par 165/6. Their bowlers, however, did well to stop Italy at 123 in 18 overs, with pacer Matthew Forde's 3 for 19 being best of the lot.

One thing that strikes you about Italy is their never-say-die attitude. It doesn't matter who their opponents are, they will come at them hard. The West Indies were perhaps caught off-guard by Italy's stubbornness on the field.

Whether it was diving full stretch to save a boundary or sprinting backwards to attempt an impossible catch, the Italians were throwing themselves at everything.

The minnows from Europe were going all out to tick that final box in their dream run in this mega international event: a big team's scalp. A bunch of expatriates who had made Italy their home, were out to make their countrymates sit up and take notice.

Besides Hopes' innings, the West Indies did not have much to show in batting with the Italians making their job difficult with some tight bowling and brilliant fielding.

Despite it being a batting wicket, a few deliveries were stopping a little, forcing the batters into two minds. The lofted drives were not always from the middle of the bat and runs were not coming easily.

Hope was opening up on occasions but might have been bogged down by the lack of support at the other end.

SCORES: West Indies 165/6 (Hope 75; Kalugamage 2-25, B Manenti 2-37) bt **Italy 123 in 18 overs** (B Manenti 26, Smuts 24; Forde 3-19, Joseph 4-30) by 42 runs.

75* Shai Hope's knock is his third fifty in T20 World Cup — the first two being 82* vs USA in Bridgetown on June 21, 2024 and 61* vs Nepal in Mumbai on Feb 15, 2026.

4/31 Shamar Joseph's first four-wicket haul in T20Is is his best in T20Is. His previous best was 3/30 vs Pakistan in Lauderhill on July 31, 2025.

1 Shamar Joseph has become the first player to take four catches and four wickets in a T20I.

Pradip Datta

TOI'S TEAM OF THE WC (#7-12)

As the first round of the 2026 T20 World Cup draws to a close, **TOI** presents a mid-tournament XI, led by Suryakumar Yadav. The top six spots are sorted (**see P1**) and here are players from Nos. 7-12...

7 Ben Manenti: Became the first Italian player to score a T20 WC half-century when he smashed 52 off 31 against Scotland. Also hammered 60 off 25 against England | M: 4, R: 138, Avg: 46, SR: 179.2, **Wks:** 5

8 Shadley van Schalkwyk: The highest wicket-taker so far with 13 wickets in 4 games. Hustling in for USA, he has made it abundantly clear that the Associate nations aren't here just to make up the numbers | M: 4, **Wks:** 13, Avg: 7.8, Economy Rate: 6.8

9 Blessing Muzarabani: Has been at the heart of Zimbabwe's surge in this T20 World Cup. Against Australia, he produced one of the tournament's defining spells, taking 4/17 to set up a stunning 23-run upset | M: 3, **Wks:** 9, Avg: 7.88, ER: 5.91

10 Varun Chakravarthy: His unreadable variations have given India control, mystery and the luxury of defending even slightly under-par totals | M: 4, **Wks:** 9, Avg: 6.9, ER: 5.2

11 Usman Tariq: The most talked-about bowler in the tournament, with his quirky action. His 4/16 against Namibia was a demolition job | M: 3, **Wks:** 8, Avg: 8.4, ER: 5.8

12 Azmatullah Omarzai (12th man): The Afghan allrounder's masterclass against the UAE — 4/15 and an unbeaten 40 — was a display of individual dominance | M: 4, R: 89, Avg: 29.66, SR: 171.1, **Wks:** 9

'Devastated' Oz look to avoid Oman 'upset'

Pallekele: Australia coach Andrew McDonald said on Thursday his players were "devastated" after their T20 World Cup exit, but they would be "zeroed in" on avoiding an embarrassing upset against Oman.

Australia failed to make the second phase for only the second time in the event's history after defeats to Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka.

"We've got a pretty sort of devastated group, it's fair to say," McDonald told reporters in Kandy ahead of Friday's final match against Oman, now a dead rubber. "We're usually alive coming to these points in time, but it's not to be.

"We've put ourselves in this position. So hopefully, Oman, we can prepare and go and do the job there."

Defeat against 20th-ranked Oman would be the biggest embarrassment of all. "There won't be any lack of motivation against Oman," said McDonald. "We've got one more World Cup game and we'll be zeroed in on that."

The match will end a chaotic Australian campaign.

"The next game is Oman. So we've got to get our heads right around that," said McDonald. I think the time to start to look back over what happened will be when we exit the shores here." AGENCIES

AUSTRALIA TO CONDUCT 'FORENSIC REVIEW' OF SORRY WC CAMPAIGN

Melbourne: Australia are set to conduct a "forensic review" of their disappointing T20 World Cup campaign after the injury-ravaged team crashed out in the group stage of the event.

The 2021 champions exited after losing to Sri Lanka and minnows Zimbabwe. They still have one match remaining against Oman in Pallekele on Friday, but that would be inconsequential.

Selector Tony Dodemaide said a full review of the performance would be done once the players are back home. "It's really disappointing the way the tournament has rolled out," Dodemaide was quoted as saying by cricket.com.au.

"But we will need some time, and take some time, once we finish our last commitment. It's important that we finish strongly on Friday against Oman. Then we'll get back and do a forensic review." PTI

Lanka's turn to be stunned by Zimbabwe

Vishal.Menon@timesofindia.com

In sport, a healthy dose of self-belief can make athletes perform extraordinary feats. Zimbabwe, buoyed by their 23-run win over the mighty Australians six nights ago, followed it up on Thursday with a stunning six-wicket win over co-hosts Sri Lanka in Colombo.

Chasing 179 on a sluggish Premadasa wicket looked daunting, but the Zimbabweans never lost belief. The chase started steadily with a 69-run opening stand between openers Brian Bennett and Tadiwanashe Marumani (34 off 26b, 5x4, 1x6).

It was captain Sikandar Raza, however, who defined the chase. Walking in at No.4, Raza struggled initially to find timing and rhythm but Zimbabwe hung on. After 14 overs, 65 runs were needed, and then Raza unleashed himself. In two overs, he tore into Sri Lanka's premier spinners, Dushan Hemantha and Maheesh Theekshana, blasting 32 runs and turning the game on its head.

At the other end, Bennett anchored the innings with calm authority. He notched up another unbeaten half-century, a 48-ball 63 that was punctuated with eight boundaries. The 23-year-old steered Zimbabwe through the tense middle overs. They stuttered a bit after losing Raza, for a whirlwind 26-ball 45, and Tashinga Musekiwa in rapid succession the manic final overs, but Bennett calmly hit the winning runs to settle the issue.

Bennett remains undefeated in this T20 World Cup and Zimbabwe remain undefeated as they registered their second-highest successful run chase in T20Is. They finish the league stage as Group B toppers. They have been so impressive that it seems almost implausible that they failed to qualify for the 2024 edition.

Earlier, batting first, Sri Lanka's innings was galvanized by their in-form opener Pathum Nissanka, who hit a 41-ball 62 (8x4) to lay the foundation for the side's 178/7.

SCORES: Zimbabwe 182/4 in 19.3 overs (Bennett 63*, Raza 45, Hemantha 2/36) bt **Sri Lanka 178/7** (Nissanka 62, Rathnayake 44, Cremer 2/27) by 6 wickets.

Afghans give coach Trott winning farewell

Neha.Sarena@timesofindia.com

Chennai: A Super-8 entry was the minimum that Afghanistan would have hoped for if they planned to give coach Jonathan Trott a fitting farewell. It didn't turn out that way, though, with the Afghans exiting in the group stage.

But on Thursday, they ensured that their long-time English coach finished his Afghan assignment with a win. Opener Ibrahim Zadran (95*, 56 balls; 7x4, 5x6) put his skillful hitting on full display as he smashed a stellar knock, his second successive half-century, to power his team to an 82-run win over Canada.

Zadran's innings — measured at the start and menacing at the finish — combined with his crucial 95-run stand for the third wicket with Sediqullah Atal (44, 32 balls; 2x4, 2x6) took Afghanistan to an imposing 200-4, after being put to bat.

LR Shankar

Afghanistan's Ibrahim Zadran made a 56-ball 95 against Canada on Thursday

The score proved more than sufficient as Canada struggled against Afghanistan's formidable spin attack. Veteran spinner Mohammad Nabi, who probably is playing his last World Cup, accentuated Canada's fall with 4-7 on a surface that aided the tweakers.

Rashid Khan (2-19) and Mujeeb Ur Rahman (1-23) applied the choke through the middle overs and sealed a comprehensive victory.

Earlier, Afghanistan lost opening enforcer Rahmanullah Gurbaz (30) and Gulbadin Naib in quick succession in the final over of the Powerplay. Pacer Jaskaran Singh (3-52) struck twice in four balls, first having Gurbaz caught at deep backward point after the batter smashed back-to-back boundaries, then trapping Naib LBW. Afghanistan reached 49-2 at the end of the Powerplay.

SCORES: Afghanistan 200/4 (Zadran 95*, Atal 44; Jaskaran 3-52) beat **Canada 118/8** (Thaker 30; Nabi 4-7) by 82 runs.

HACK OF THE DAY **SPEAK TO ANYONE IN INDIA IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE**

WHAT IT SOLVES: Perfect for travelers or business owners who need to communicate in regions where they don't know the local language

WHAT TO DO: Use Bhashini app for real-time voice-to-voice translation in 22+ Indian languages.

STEPS:

1. Download the Bhashini app (Govt of India).
2. Open "Converse" mode and select your language (e.g., Hindi) and the other person's language (e.g., Tamil).
3. Tap the mic and speak; the phone will play your words back in the other language instantly.
4. The other person speaks into the mic, and you hear it in your own language.

Scan for more hacks

Hacks are based on verified public sources. Readers are advised to follow official websites & updated rules
Tip from richa.gandhi@timesofindia.com

DGCA carries out 51 audits of aircraft charters

Mumbai: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) carried out 51 regulatory audits of non-scheduled operators (aircraft charter companies) in 2025, govt said on Thursday, adding that all findings arising from those inspections had been closed.

The ministry of civil aviation said the audits included surveillance of VSR Ventures, operator of the Learjet 45 (VT-SSK) involved in an accident at Baramati on Jan 28. The accident killed five people, including then deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar.

Following the accident, DGCA was directed to conduct a special audit of VSR Ventures, covering regulatory compliance, safety management systems, crew training and flight data monitoring practices. The audit commenced on Feb 4 and is expected to be completed shortly, the ministry said.

The ministry said the investigation is evidence-based and includes examination of the wreckage and testing of relevant components. TNN

'Gag' on protest: Songs of dissent echo in JNU and DU

Students Slam 'Clampdown On Representation'

Sugandha.Jha
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Resistance found its voice in songs on Thursday at Jawaharlal Nehru University and Delhi University, where students gathered to defend what they called their "right to dissent".

Both universities face unprecedented administrative action. At JNU, an entire elected students' union panel has been rusticated. At DU, a month-long blanket ban on gatherings is in force across campuses. Student groups have criticised the moves as a clampdown on protest and representation.

At JNU, lines from "Hum Dekhenge", a poem by Faiz Ahmed Faiz that is associated with political resistance, echoed through the park near the School of Languages, where students have been holding an encampment for the last four days.

File photo

At JNU, lines from 'Hum Dekhenge', a poem associated with political resistance, echoed where students have been holding an encampment for the last four days

The protest began after the university rusticated the elected union panel over alleged damage to university property during a demonstration last year. The agitation had been against the installation of a facial recognition-based entry system in the university's central library, which students had opposed. The entry system was allegedly damaged during the protest.

Following the disciplinary action, members of the panel were served hostel eviction notices this year and barred from the campus. The rustication leaves JNU without elected student representation for at least the next eight months, until fresh polls are held.

Supporters of the now removed panel have since been attending classes in the open, with some teachers and academic units announcing boycotts in solidarity. Student leaders have demanded revocation of the rustication, withdrawal of the hostel eviction notices and fines and the CPD manual which penalises protests on campus.

There was no response from the JNU administration on the protest.

Some kilometres away, at DU, protests unfolded amid heavy police presence on North Campus, where a month-long ban on public gatherings and protest is in force.

Songs again became the language of protest. A visually impaired student beat a dhapli and sang, "Woh sab kuch karne ko taiyaar; subhi afsar unke...", a satirical verse that has circulated widely on social media as political commentary.

Man held for threatening to shoot Rahul

Kota: A man was arrested on Thursday in Rajasthan's Kota for allegedly threatening to shoot leader of opposition Rahul Gandhi and 25 other Congress MPs in a video he posted online, citing their alleged verbal abuse of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla during the ongoing budget session.

Raja Singh Amera claims to be a divisional spokesperson of Karni Sena. But both Karni Sena and BJP have distanced themselves from him, asserting he has no formal ties to either organisation. Speaker Birla is Kota's BJP MP.

In the 0.55-second video clip, Amera warned that he and others would vandalise the MPs' homes and shoot them "one by one."

He also said the administration would be responsible if such a not took place.

Kota City SP Tejaswani Gautam said Amera faced four previous cases. The fresh case has been registered under Sections 351, 352 and 353 of BNS, pertaining to criminal intimidation, breach of public peace and mischief. TNN

Bihar govt rejects demand to review prohibition law

The Bihar govt on Thursday rejected demands for reviewing the decade-old prohibition law, stating the ban on liquor was imposed after taking all parties on board. Union minister Jitan Ram Manjhi and RLM MLA Madhav Anand, both part of the NDA, had sought a review of the policy, stating it had caused immense financial losses to the state. Parliamentary affairs minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary said, "The law was passed after taking all the parties onboard." TNN

300 homes in dark as transformer stolen for copper

Night fell hard on a Lucknow suburb. Then power vanished. By dawn, a 440 kVA transformer had been skinned for copper and over 300 households were staring at dark bulbs. The Rs 11-lakh unit stood in Raj Enclave of Shivpuri — fed by Chinhat substation in Gomti Nagar zone — until a gang rolled in before sunrise Thursday. CCTV shows men arriving in a Swift Dzire, tools ready. Minutes later, the transformer lay split open, its copper winding was gone.

STATISTICS A slice of life in numbers

China adds more power in a year than most nations have in total

In the last four years, China added over three times more power to its grid than India's total installed capacity

Suit filed in 1947 draws to a close in Bby HC

Swati.Deshpande
@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: A suit dating back to the year India got independence finally stood disposed of by the Bombay high court this month, with the fourth generation of the original land owner amicably settling a property dispute. The estate included vast portions of the village of Dahisar in north Mumbai. The area was a whopping 2,891 acres or over 1,100 hectares. It was 3.5 times the size of Central Park in New York.

Over the decades, the legal battle saw repeated pleas against sale of parcels of land in Dahisar to private parties, as well as an acquisition by the State under the Salsette Law and Forest Act.

Justice Farhan Dubash, one of the newest judges of the HC, put a quietus via a consent term order to the legal tussle 79 years, or over three-quarters of a century later, on a suit filed on Oct 7, 1947.

The original suit had sought administration of the estate of one Haji Alimohammed Haji Cassum following his demise, as per personal laws applicable. It was filed by Badrushama, widow of Suleman Haji Alimohammed Haji Cassum, versus Salim Dawood Aghoatwala and others.

Justice Dubash, began his order with: "This order disposes of probably the oldest suit that is currently pending before the Bombay high court."

Over the years, several orders were passed in the matter, including a preliminary decree passed on Nov 25, 1953 that determined the legal share of all heirs.

Before that, the HC appointed a court receiver in 1950 to look after the property. Successive generations continued the legal battle before the HC. Finally, with the litigation entering the fourth generation, all heirs decided to amicably settle.

Manipur man braves bullets, storms to save sparrows with ₹5 solution

MK Henry | TNN

Churachandpur: Once common, now contested. House sparrows breed fast. Their habitats disappear faster. In conflict-scarred Manipur, survival depends on where a Rs 5 nest is hung — and who dares to hang it.

The smallest birds face the biggest odds. As does Anish Ahamad. Gunfire can break without warning where he lives, along the taut seam between Churachandpur and Bishnupur districts. Step outside at the wrong moment and a walk can turn into a dash for cover.

Still, when the clouds gather, Ahamad is on the move. He knocks on doors carrying handmade sparrow nests — round, pouch-shaped, woven from natural fibre, light enough to hang on trees or walls. Gusty winds and heavy rain can erase months of nesting. The weeks before the rainy season are his rush hour. He shows families where to place nests, how to tie them, how to keep a fragile mission alive.

Environmentalist Anish Ahamadan has installed more than 600 nests and distributed nearly 300 for free in Manipur

This is year seven of 'Save Sparrow' — a rare constant in a region ruled by uncertainty.

Ahamad, an environmentalist from Kwakta village in Bishnupur district, has installed more than 600 nests and distributed nearly 300 for free. He estimates local sparrow numbers rise by about 5,000 a year.

Timing is everything. "House sparrows have an extensive breeding season from March to Sept," he says. "They are prolific breeders, capable of producing two to four, sometimes five broods a year." A nest costs under Rs 5 to make.

Sparrows are small but strategic allies for farmers. They eat crop pests and larvae during breeding season, reduce reliance on chemical sprays, and signal ecosystem health around fields and homes. Their decline tracks pesticide use, loss of hedges and cavities, and concrete sprawl. Bringing sparrows back means fewer insects in crops, better pollination conditions, and steadier yields at low cost.

The work unfolds against violence. Since 2023, ethnic conflict between Meiteis and Kukis has repeatedly stalled his rounds. Ahamad is a Meitei Pangal. Staying safe often means staying indoors.

"Due to the unfortunate events, I had to go without venturing out to work for a week," he said. "At certain points, I needed to move to other places for safety."

At his home near the district border, danger can erupt anytime.

BENNETT, COLEMAN & CO. LTD. | Estd. 1838 | VOL. 43 NO. 44 BENGALURU | FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2026 | METRO | PAGES 38 | PRICE ₹6

THE TIMES OF INDIA

INCLUDES 6 PAGES OF BANGALORE TIMES AND 16 PAGES OF TIMES PROPERTY (*CITY AREAS ONLY)

INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER | To subscribe call 1800 1200 004 or visit subscribe.timesofindia.com

Karnataka sweat over skipper Padikkal's injury ahead of Ranji final against J&K in Hubballi, even as team completes formalities against U'khand in semifinal, P 18

lodhagroup.com/avalon

THE BEST VIEWS HAVE
ALWAYS BEEN FROM THE FRONT ROW.

LODHA
AVALON

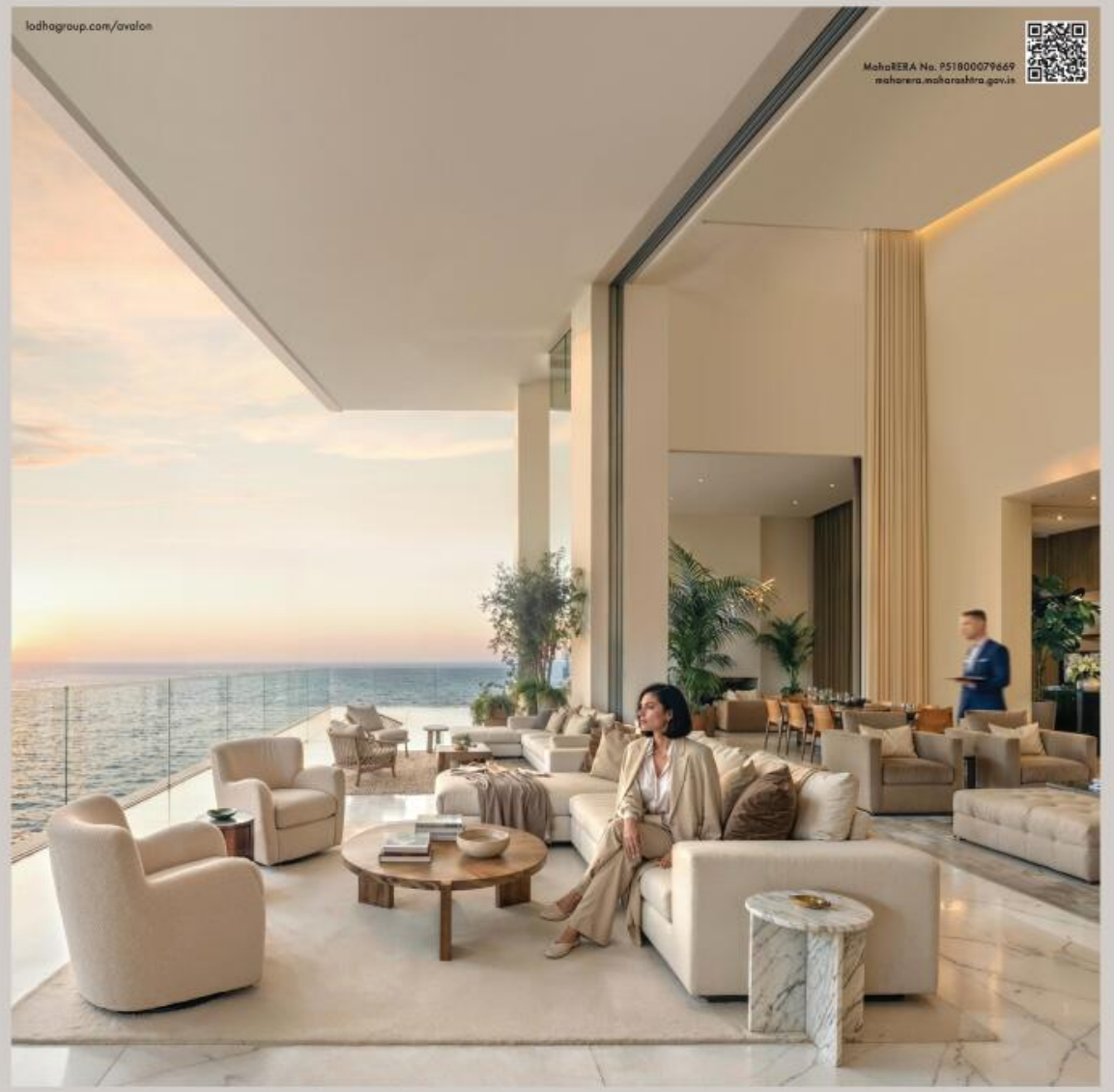
JUHU SEAFACE

WORLD'S FINEST DEVELOPMENTS

HOMES THAT SPEAK VOLUMES.

LODHA
AVALON

JUHU SEAFACE



THE ONLY THING
YOU WON'T NOTICE IS THE SERVICE.

LODHA
AVALON

JUHU SEAFACE

WORLD'S FINEST DEVELOPMENTS

Corporate Office: One Lodha Place, near Lodha World Towers, Senapati Bapat Marg, Mumbai - 400 013.

BENNETT, COLEMAN & CO. LTD. | Estd. 1838 | VOL. 43 NO. 44 BENGALURU | FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2026 | METRO | PAGES 28 | PRICE ₹6

THE TIMES OF INDIA

INCLUDES 6 PAGES OF BANGALORE TIMES AND 16 PAGES OF TIMES PROPERTY (*CITY AREAS ONLY)

INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER | To subscribe call 1800 1200 004 or visit subscribe.timesofindia.com

TMC MP Mahua Moitra takes pet battle to Delhi high court, challenges district court order denying shared custody of rottweiler Henry, P 12

NISSAN

INTRODUCING

THE ALL-NEW NISSAN

GRAVITE

THE NEW CLASS OF TOGETHERNESS

A 7-SEATER INSPIRED BY 1.4 BILLION INDIANS

THE NISSAN GRAVITE LIMITED LAUNCH EDITION WITH EXCITING FEATURES

Dual Dashcam | JBL Speakers | Air Purifier | Wireless Charger | C-Shaped Aero Accents

HURRY! FIRST 5000^ BOOKINGS GET 5 YEARS COMPLIMENTARY SERVICE

INTRODUCTORY PRICE STARTS@ ₹5.65 LAKH

INDUSTRY-FIRST VIRTUAL SALES ASSISTANT

SCAN TO INTERACT NOW

THE NISSAN SERVICE PROMISE

10 Years Warranty* Enjoy 3 years Standard + 7 Years Extended Warranty*

3 Years 24x7 Roadside Assistance (RSA) Standard

Lowest Cost of Maintenance @40p/km*

FOR ENQUIRIES GIVE A MISSED CALL 9833 800 700

THE NEW CLASS OF **PREMIUMNESS**

Plush Suede & Leatherette Seats | Intuitive Floating 20.32 cm Infotainment Screen | Dual Tone Interior
(with Wireless Android Auto™ & Apple CarPlay*)

THE NEW CLASS OF **JOYFUL VERSATILITY**

Multiple Modular Configurations | Recline & Slide 2nd Row Seats and Removable 3rd Row Seats | 625L+ Boot Space^

INDUSTRY-FIRST VIRTUAL SALES ASSISTANT

SCAN TO INTERACT NOW

THE NEW CLASS OF **COMFORT & ROOMINESS**

Tropicalised AC with 3-Row Vents | 7-Seat Comfort-First Design | Spacious Cabin & Ergonomic Seating

AUTHORIZED NISSAN DEALERS: KARNATAKA: BENGALURU: NAGARBHAVI: JUBILANT NISSAN- 8291047378, **HBR LAYOUT:** JUBILANT NISSAN- 8291061402, **MARATHALLI RING ROAD:** RAJA NISSAN 8291047558, **BRIGADE ROAD:** RAJA NISSAN- 8291047634, **HOSUR ROAD:** RAJA NISSAN- 8291047640, **HOSPET:** RAYSLINE NISSAN- 9619894522, **BELGAUM:** SWASTI NISSAN- 9619894719, **HUBLI:** SWASTI NISSAN- 8291047572, **MANGALORE:** PAI SALES- 7039030479.

*Terms & Conditions Apply. All prices ex-showroom Delhi. The model shown is a Limited Edition Nissan Gravite. Features and accessories shown may not be standard equipment, and are subject to change without prior notice. Approved accessories included from trusted Nissan suppliers, they are not 'Nissan Genuine Accessory'. Warranty on such accessories is supported by the supplier and is limited to 1 year from the sale of the vehicle. Finance is at the sole discretion of NMFS. ^Standard warranty of 3-year or 1,00,000 km, whichever comes first, and can be extended to 10 years or 2,50,000 km at an additional cost. Android Auto™ and Apple CarPlay®. ^The first 5,000 bookings in the Nissan CMS system until 31st Mar'26 are applicable for the offer of 5 years of complimentary service. ^Lowest cost of maintenance at 40p in the B-MPV category segment refers to B-MPV models with a length of less than 4m. Boot space is as per various modular configurations available in the vehicle. Please consult an authorised Nissan dealer for the latest information on features/specifications before deciding to place an order.

NISSAN FINANCE

The Tayron R-Line

For all your *ands*